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General view of Malema Camp

Frontispiece.

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WITH PLUMER IN MATABELELAND

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE MATABELELAND RELIEF FORCE DURING THE REBELLION OF 1896

BY

FRANK W. SYKES

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE MOUNT MORGAN GOLD MINE QUEENSLAND"

ASSISTED BY

C. G. LÖWINGER C.E AND OTHERS

ILLUSTRATED WITH SKETCHES BY F. VIGERS WORTHINGTON AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS

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Preface

IN compiling this work, the writer, serving as a Trooper in the M.R.F., has endeavoured to depict the life of the rank and file of that Corps as it presented itself to him throughout the Campaign.

The narrative does not presume to deal exhaustively with the Matabeleland War of 1896; but, at the same time, an account of the course of events that preceded the war, together with a brief description of the state of Bulawayo when beleaguered, have been included in order to render the work more complete. Other auxiliary chapters have been written with the same object in view.

It may be pointed out that military operations, as seen and experienced by a trooper, are not all *couleur de rose*, either at the time or afterwards, no matter what his preconceived notions may have been on the subject.

Again, the trooper's scope of observation is limited, and opportunities of learning the "whys" and "wherefores" of this and that, are not frequent. Hence, to pretend to describe technically the movements and operations of the Column would be absurd.

To those civilians who are seized with military ardour, to those who hanker after the romance of war, this volume as telling something of its less attractive side, may serve to point a moral.

That much has been omitted which might have found

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mention in the following pages, had time and space permitted, may readily be understood; but as the book does not pretend to be in the nature of a history, the author feels that no apology is needed on this score.

Such facts and details as were dependent on hearsay have been sifted with care, so as to render those selected, so far as possible trustworthy and reliable.

The Author tenders his sincere thanks to the many kind friends who have assisted him in preparing the letter-press—notably to Mr. C. G. Löwinger, C.E., to whose painstaking care and additions much is due; and to Major Robertson, Messrs. Johan and Henry Colenbrander, the Rev. D. Carnegie, Native Commissioner Jackson, and others whose names appear as contributors.

With regard to the photographs and sketches, the former were rendered possible through the kind offices of Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington and the Officers of the Matoppo Forts. The Sketches from the pen of the Author's friend, Mr. R. V. Worthington, speak for themselves.

FRANK W. SYKES.

BULAWAYO,
February, 1897.

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With Plumer in Matabeleland

SECTION I

CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

The Conquest of Matabeleland—First Ideas of Rebellion—The Government and the Natives—The Cattle Question—The Land Question—The White Man and the Native—Awaiting the Opportunity—The Opportunity Arrives.

THE flight and death of Lobengula, followed by the occupation of Bulawayo, and the tragic ending of the campaign of 1893, caused affairs in Matabeleland rapidly to quiet down. The exciting incidents connected with what then was believed to be the final struggle of the Matabele nation to retain the country which for sixty years or so they had held in undisputed possession, had, by the end of 1895, become matters of history. It appeared to be generally recognised that a Rhodesian Mining Boom was not to be expected until the completion of the railway to Bulawayo, when, with the advent of crushing machinery, the value of the country, as a producer of gold and other minerals, would either be established or disproved. Following the natural order of things, the sensational element had made way for the commercial and commonplace. The territory

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acquired so opportunely by the genius and foresight of Mr. Rhodes—for the covetous eyes of Boer and German had been already cast towards it—was now to take its place among the British possessions, for what it was intrinsically worth: a point which time and circumstance alone could answer.

But a lurid chapter of battle, murder, and sudden death had yet to be recorded. The account of dead white men, which had to be rendered as "the price of sovereignty," was not yet paid in full.

Although speaking with a knowledge of what has occurred with the wisdom which follows the event, the question naturally arises, Was not the assumption of unqualified possession on the very face of it premature? Of the three direct encounters between the white troops and massed natives—at Singuesi, Imbembezi, and Shangani—during the war of occupation, only that at Imbembezi can be claimed as a decisive victory for the white man. Was it then to be expected that a race like the Matabele, with the warlike instincts of their Zulu forefathers, would, after one taste of defeat, be content to take up suddenly the position of serfs, and submit to whatever conditions their victors, the white men, might think fit to impose? It says much for their cunning and self-restraint that they should have lulled all suspicion by apparently accepting the force of circumstances as kismet, and giving no signs of further resistance to the sway of the white man for nearly two and a half years.

The fire, however, was smouldering. It was soon to break out more fiercely than before, with results disastrous to those settlers, traders, and prospectors who had no inkling that it was even alight. And it took a big blaze to convince them, too.

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CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

Early in 1896 several untoward events following one on the other in quick succession, collectively gave an opportunity of which the Matabele were not slow to take advantage.

First and foremost, in point of time if not of importance, was the Jameson Raid, which took out of the country in a body upwards of 300 fighting men and most of the available rifles. Following close on the heels of this event came the rinderpest, or cattle plague.

Starting among the herds of wild game in the territory north of the Zambesi, it rapidly swept through Rhodesia, cutting off at one blow the main source of food supply and the principal means of transport, whilst at the same time the protracted drought was seriously affecting the crops.

The above circumstances are not in themselves to be accepted as directly accountable for the rising, but, as will be shown, though the full force of the calamity might have been minimised or averted, had more judgment and grasp of the situation been displayed before it was too late, they were indeed important factors in the situation.

THE CAUSES OF THE REBELLION.

In inquiring into the cause or causes which led up to the rebellion of the Matabele nation in 1896, the inquirer finds himself hampered with the consideration of so many apparently independent factors that it is a difficult task to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the real origin. One thing, however, may be safely said, and points its own moral. When the B.S.A. Company laid armed hands upon the Matabele nation, they merely surprised them into an apparent submission, and believing the effect of the

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coup d'état to be final, proceeded to administer the land upon the basis of a white dominant race and a heliot nation of conquered blacks. But the Matabele were not conquered, far from it, neither did they in the smallest degree consider themselves so. With the dissimulation of all negro people they remained passive, summing up meanwhile the possibilities in view of the new order of things which they had now been forced to take into account.

When, forsaken by his nation, his best regiments defeated, his hopes and health shattered, Lobengula, like a wounded animal, burrowed away into the wooded regions of the Shangani, and died there miserable and throneless, he left his legacy of vengeance behind him. Before he started on the trek northwards which he was following till his death, he is said to have admonished his wayward nation in these terms: "Be patient and be watchful; wait your opportunity." The first seeds of the crop of horrors of 1896 were sown; let us see by what process the germ was matured and ultimately brought to active fruition.

The Government and the Natives.

With regard to the general attitude of the Government towards the nation whose country they had annexed, it may be said that too much stress was laid upon the annexation from the point of view of financial possibilities. On the other hand, too little attention was paid to the administrative process necessary to convert the country into a safe field for lucrative enterprise. Every method which diplomatic acumen could suggest was adopted to secure the investment of capital in the new country. It was thus hoped to build a golden future upon the basis of

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monetary interests. That the possession of the land was rather an understanding than a fact was disregarded. The rights of the Matabele as political units, to the consideration of those who had assumed dominion, were equally overlooked. To this omission may be ascribed the efforts made by the bereft owners of the land to reassert their divine rights, as enunciated in the familiar proverb, that "possession is nine points of the law."

Taking, as the B.S.A. Co. did, so much for granted, tacitly recognising a non-existent state of submission on the part of the natives, it is scarcely wonderful that no trouble should have been taken to formulate a native policy. And yet had this been done, it is possible that the Matabeleland Rebellion of 1896 might never have added its ghastly record to the history of Pioneer England.

In the first place the organisation of native affairs was most rudimentary, and consisted in merely appointing Native Commissioners over ill-defined districts, with a general order to "boss up things," which they proceeded to do upon more or less original lines. The native idea of government is based so entirely upon submission to the one supreme head, that as Sikombo said at the last indaba, they felt, after the white man had taken over their country, "like a flock without a leader." Thus, then, an ever-present grievance that the Matabele as a nation had against the Government was the constant changing of the head white man in the country to whom they could look up, and from whom they could obtain redress. That they have had some cause to complain on this point is beyond dispute. "No sooner do we get to know him than he goes away." This is true enough, and has always been their trouble. The influence of the strong personality of such men as Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson is not only beneficial,

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but an absolute necessity to maintain evenly balanced relations between black and white. Whether the rebellion would have been averted had either of those two leaders remained in the country permanently is a matter of conjecture. Probably not. At the same time, the absence of a strong man at the head of affairs at such a critical period, is a point that cannot be ignored when discussing the direct and indirect causes of the rebellion.

The natives are strongly conservative by nature and disposition, and the frequent changes in the *personnel* of the Administration were certainly not calculated to settle the native element. "We no sooner get to know the big white induna than he goes away." Thus said the native, and thus thought also the white settlers themselves.

On the other hand, however, it must not, in all fairness to the Company under the Charter, be forgotten that the administration of the new possession was to a great extent experimental; that in securing as British territory such an immense tract of country as Rhodesia, difficulties had to be confronted with which the Imperial and Cape Governments had so far shown no inclination to cope; and that in so materially expanding the Empire, the risks to be run were great in proportion as the advantages to be gained were considerable. Again, whatever mistakes have been made here, they have their counterparts in Natal and Cape Colony, where the native element, even after all these years of white settlement, is still a source of constant anxiety, and as recently proved, a menace to order and tranquillity.

The Cattle Question.

The insufficiently organised native department soon found itself face to face with an important factor in the

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maintenance of an *entente cordiale* between the occupiers of the land and the late owners. The hiatus came in the shape of the definition of ownership as regards the cattle found in the country when the B.S.A. Co. took possession of it. The greatest claim that a native has to importance is the number of cattle he possesses. Cattle to him represent the one important factor of existence. Their flesh and milk supply him with food, their hides he uses for clothing, bedding, shields. In exchange for cattle he can purchase a wife or wives—the recognised ratio being ten to one; this matrimonial custom, known as "lobola," can be directly traced to their Zulu ancestry. Consequently the native sets great store by his cattle, and any interference with them he naturally enough resents bitterly.

After the occupation of the country in 1893, the Chartered Company, by right of conquest, claimed all the king's cattle, which virtually meant all the cattle in the country; for Lobengula, as absolute despot, only allowed his subjects the right of keeping cattle on sufferance, hence in a way they were all royal cattle. The number at the time was estimated at a quarter of a million head. The indunas therefore were instructed by the authorities to drive these in from the various parts of the country to Bulawayo. Some complied with this demand, others did not. To enforce their claim, the Government authorised the different Native Commissioners to collect and send in a certain number of head each month—from 100 to 150—according to the size of their respective districts. This system of appropriation was carried on for a period of eleven months, and was in no sense satisfactory. The necessarily arbitrary manner in which as a general rule it had to be carried out, the perpetual irritation so engendered, and the thankless task imposed on the Native Commis-

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sioners, whose monthly levy was not calculated to bring about an amicable understanding between themselves and the natives, made it obvious that the scheme was not workable. The result was that the Native Commissioners without exception reported unfavourably, and the system was discontinued.

A meeting of the head men of the nation was then called, when it was mutually agreed that the Government should take fourty-five per cent. of the cattle, and that the remaining fifty-five per cent. should be branded N.C. (Native Cattle), and returned to the natives for their own use.

On the breaking out of the rinderpest, the enforced shooting of the newly restored cattle in the infected districts rendered the natives desperate. The white men, it seemed, had only given them back their cattle to be shot down. They regarded it simply as an act of spite. "What was the use of returning them to us, if they are all to be killed?" Not being students of bacteriology, they were unable to discern how the killing of some could save the lives of others. Dissatisfied before, they were now bitterly exasperated.

The Land Question.

The ownership and transfer of land puzzled the natives. For instance, a man would buy a farm from the Government. On taking possession he would perhaps find several native kraals situated upon his property. He would intimate to the natives that they must look upon him as their master; the land upon which they were living now belonged to him; and if they wished to remain where they were, they must go to Bulawayo and obtain leave to do so from the Government. They would make the necessary application

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and receive a pass entitling them to remain, providing they did duty as herds or labourers for the white man. The owner, as time went on, would likely enough sell his farm to some one else. When proprietor No. 2 came on the scene, he would inform the natives that "The other man is gone; I am now your master." Occurrences of this nature confused the natives completely. They entirely failed to grasp the situation, and considered they were being treated most unfairly.

The Native Police.

The force of Native Police was organised in the beginning of May, 1895, and was composed of men taken from the Matabele nation. A great many of the Imbesu and Insukumini, the late Lobengula's two principal regiments, belonged to the force, which had a numerical strength of 150 non-commissioned officers and men. Their duties were to assist Native Commissioners in the various districts in collecting hut tax, arresting deserters, branding cattle, tracing hidden cattle, procuring evidence in native cases,—in fact, to do police and detective work generally in connection with the natives.

This was an experiment which, contrary to all expectation, turned out badly. As events proved, the natives should not have been trusted. Sent out under no supervision but that of their own native non-commissioned officers to enforce the authority of the new Government, they, under cover of this authority, took the opportunity to pay off old scores against, and generally tyrannise over, any of their own people against whom they had a grudge.

The White Man and the Native.

Owing to the large tracts of country which the hard-worked Native Commissioners had to supervise, it was

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impossible for them to be always at hand to adjust the differences between the white settlers and the natives in different parts of their districts. Scattered over the country were miners, prospectors, storekeepers, and others, who were entirely dependent on the natives for labour.

Far removed from the seat of Government, with the Native Commissioner of the district as sole arbiter of disputes between employers and employed, unrestrained by the fear of being brought to book, the white man in the country had, to a large extent, a free hand. It is only necessary to reflect a moment on the manifold phases of human nature to realise how, under such conditions, the liberty of the situation could be, and was, abused by the white settlers. On the other hand, the number of those who received timely warning to decamp when the rising commenced, is sufficient to show that there were many white settlers living on friendly terms with their black neighbours. But, as hinted above, cases of tyranny and rascality on the part of the dominant race could, if necessary, be cited to prove that the treatment of natives by individuals was not always what it should have been.

An unfortunate idea seems to prevail amongst the men who principally compose the pioneers and developers of a country inhabited by blacks, that in a man whose skin is of different hue to their own, the moral laws governing the relations between the sexes are also different or totally non-existent. By thus relegating the black man to the position almost of a mere brute, some of the settlers in a new country are apt to lose that natural feeling of respect which would influence their actions were they living amongst people of their own colour. The conduct of many of the whites towards their black sisters, married or virgin, in Matabeleland, certainly contributed to the

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Matabeleland Native Police.

Face p. 150

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causes which have led up to this unfortunate rebellion. To cite any particular cases would be invidious, but the fact remains, and any consideration of the influences which worked up the native mind to the pitch of armed rebellion, would be incomplete without a reference to this as one of the causes.

There is no doubt also, that the conditions of native labour were not favourable to the natives. They were often made to work for masters they did not like. The "Maholis," or slaves of the Matabele (who, when it came to fighting, for the greater part, made common cause with them), furnished the principal material for labour; but as the money they earned was often annexed by the Matabele, they were not over-anxious to hire themselves out at all. Again, employers who paid their boys by the month, would, in some cases, work them to within a few days of the end of the month, and then ill-treat them to such a degree that they were only too glad to run away and forfeit their wages—the object aimed at.

Summary.

We have seen how the Matabele nation through various causes had fostered the idea of re-establishing the old order of things, by dispossessing the white man in his turn of the land he had grasped. To find the mainspring which lay at the bottom of this revolutionary machinery, we must look for an originating master mind, and the means he employed. We find the first as nearly as possible in Umlugulu, and the second in his collusion with Siginyamatje and Mquate, two of the chief mouthpieces or children of the M'limo or Deity. A reference to the special chapter on the religious beliefs of the Matabele, will show how easily the *modus operandi* of the M'limo

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worship lent itself to trickery. Thus the M'limo's oracular utterances were used to convey the ideas of the leaders of the insurrection to the people, investing them with the influence of the supernatural. It will be shown elsewhere, again, how a series of curious coincidences helped the "Abantan M'limo" to gain an ascendancy over the mass of the Matabele nation.

The insurrection came to a head with the advent of the opportunity for which they had been anxiously waiting. The idea first gathered shape in the minds of the would-be rebels when Dr. Jameson started down country with all the police. When the news of the reverses met with by the Doctor reached the native ears, they saw in it a sign that the time had come. The reputed invincible Jameson had suffered defeat; surely this was an omen! Even then the sanguinary retaliation would not have commenced at the moment it did, had it not been for a *fracas* between a party of native police and the inhabitants of a Makupekupeni kraal. The native blood was aroused, however, and the terrible murders began. Had the original scheme of treachery and stealthy attack been carried out at the appointed time, it is probable that not a white settler would have been left in Matabeleland to tell the tale of massacre and torture.

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SECTION II

THE EFFECTS OF THE RISING

CHAPTER I

Bulawayo in Laager

First Rumours—Attitude of the Authorities—The Peril is Realised—The First Alarm—A Beleaguered Town—Actual Resources—The First Fights—The Laager—The Defences of the Town—Life in Laager—The Rebels Surround the Town—The Situation in Matabeleland.

THE news of the unfortunate termination of the Jameson Raid opened the year 1896 with ill-omened tidings. Scarcely had the evil impression of that event began to subside than the rinderpest spread consternation in every mind. It was shortly after the commencement of the ravages of this fatal cattle disease, that vague rumours began to circulate of an intended rising of the Matabele. Tales of natives having been seen polishing guns and sharpening assegais became prevalent. Both rumour and statement were alike treated with derision, the authorities themselves regarding the news as so improbable as not even to deserve consideration. However, a man called Usher, who had lived in the country long before the occupation, and was intimately familiar with the natives amongst whom he ranked as an induna, now came forward with a solemn warning most particularly addressed to the Government. His

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announcements were so positive that the authorities were forced to take notice of them, and this was done by threatening their author with imprisonment if he continued to circulate such foolishly alarmist reports. This, in the face, too, of repeated and earnest warnings from the Native Commissioners of several districts.

The absence of Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, together with the fact that Mr. Duncan, the Acting Administrator, had only just arrived in Bulawayo, perhaps account for the extraordinary attitude taken by the authorities. The assurance of the Government was however rudely disturbed when, on the 23rd March, news was brought in by a prospector that Maddocks, another prospector, had been murdered at Inseza, that the natives were openly rebelling in that district, that every one in that part of the country was going into laager, and that other murders had already taken place.

Then, and then only, was it realised that the situation was critical, and a council of defence—consisting of Mr. A. H. F. Duncan, commanding; General Digby Willoughby, Chief of the Staff; Captain Nicholson, Military Secretary; Captain Carden, C.S.O. and Adjutant R.H.V., and the commanders of the various troops of the R.H.V.—was hastily formed to meet the emergency.

A patrol of the M.M.P. (then gradually being reorganised) was sent down to Inseza under Captain Southey, accompanied by the Hon. Maurice Gifford. In the evening of the same day, a force consisting of sixty men of the Rhodesia Horse Volunteers under Captain Napier, left for the Shangani to rescue any white people who might be in danger; while Captain Grey, with another troop, started out in the direction of the Tekwe Store. On the following day further reports came in of murders in the

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Filabusi District, and Captain Spreckley, with twenty-five men, started for that quarter early in the morning. Shortly afterwards Mr. Selous came racing in from Essexvale, bringing Mrs. Selous with him, and on arriving, promptly raised a party of twenty-five men to proceed in that direction; while Captain Dawson, with like promptitude, levied a small corps to reconnoitre the country in the neighbourhood of the Umsingwane Drift. At noon that day, the 25th, Mr. Duncan held a public meeting at the Court House, at which he called upon every able-bodied man to enrol for service.

THE NEW CLUB BUILDING, BULAWAYO.

By this time it was recognised that a general rebellion was taking place, and every one responded to the appeal. The Dutch residents offered to form a corps of their own, under Mr. A. H. van Rensburg, who in an eloquent speech, expressed the readiness of his countrymen to fight in defence of the land of their adoption. This Dutch, or rather Afrikander, corps rendered the most signal service throughout the subsequent campaign.

Thus we have the strange spectacle of Dutch and English—who even yet, in the Transvaal, were straining at the leash as it were, to engage in a tussle for supremacy—here

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in far-off Matabeleland, ranging shoulder to shoulder for common defence against a common foe. The question at issue was not Boer *versus* Uitlander, but White *versus* Black.

On the night of this same day—Wednesday, March 25th—a date which will never be forgotten by those in Bulawayo at the time—the actuality of the danger was brought home to the most sceptical in a startling manner. An individual on the suburban stands inadvertently let off his rifle. The town was thrown into a complete state of panic by shouts of "To the Club House with the women! The Matabele are on the town!" The "alarm," followed by the "double," was sounded repeatedly, and the inhabitants, bringing their womenfolk and children, came rushing up to the Club. Owing to the lack of organisation, with but few exceptions, men had no idea of where to go or what to do; small excuse if, under the circumstances, they lost their heads. The Government store was besieged by a clamouring and excited crowd of citizens, eager above everything, to obtain possession of a rifle, and if needs be, die fighting. After what seemed an eternity of waiting, the window of the building was thrown up, and rifles were handed out as fast as possible. Then the clamour and confusion was increased tenfold. Men fought their way up to the source of supply, clambering on to each other's shoulders, grabbing and snatching the coveted weapons, some struggling in vain for a place, others more fortunate getting away with two rifles, and so under the moonlight the distribution of arms went on until the last of the supply had been given out.

Many who had succeeded in possessing themselves of a rifle and ammunition had no more idea of how to use them than the babe unborn. Men with Lee-Metfords found

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they had been served out with Martini-Henry cartridges and *vice versâ*; whilst those who were properly equipped, in many cases, would have been more dangerous to them-

TYPES OF THE AFRIKANDER CORPS.

selves and their friends than to the enemy, if the necessity for firing had arisen. After a while all those with arms were taken in hand by officers, marched off in detach-

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ments, and stationed at various points commanding the approaches to the town.

Although the men who volunteered to serve as defenders of the town quickly adapted themselves to their novel work, some of them at the first set-off were entirely unfamiliar with the use of firearms. One man, for instance, was discovered attempting to load his rifle by endeavouring to put a cartridge down the muzzle; whilst another budding warrior who was walking down the street with rifle under arm and a supply of ammunition stowed away in his pocket, was heard to inquire naïvely of a friend, "Fred, do you think there is any danger of these exploding with the heat of my hand?"

The women and children, meanwhile, were all collected and placed in the new Club building, where, huddled together in an almost compact mass—for every inch of space was occupied—they remained throughout the night in fear and trembling, expecting every moment to hear the first shots which would herald the onslaught of the rebels. Fortunately, however, nothing occurred to disturb the peace of the inhabitants, and, under the conditions, it was well that it was so. Had the rebels rushed the town by force before the preparations for defence had been completed, the consequences would have been too ghastly to contemplate.

The events of the Wednesday night made it apparent that it was necessary to organise some proper means of defence for the town, as well as a place of refuge for the women and children of which there were large numbers in Bulawayo. On Thursday, the 26th, early in the morning, the commencement of a laager was formed round the Market buildings with empty wagons. Four machine guns were placed, one at each corner of the enclosure, and barbed

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wire thrown on the ground at a distance of about forty feet all round the line of wagons. During the afternoon Captain Pittendrigh, with twenty men of the Afrikander Corps, left to rescue the people living at Inyati, who were reported to be in danger. At night all the women and children were housed in the Market Hall, the bulk of the men sleeping on and under the wagons, whilst the rest were picketed at various points round the town.

The signal for every one to fall back on the laager was to be three rifle-shots, and much alarm was occasioned by some dynamite charges being exploded in the well on the Square near the Market. As no warning had been given to the women, they naturally concluded that the enemy was at hand, and for a few moments the scene was deplorable, several premature births taking place under the most pitiful conditions. When the alarm took place, a number of individuals rushed in their panic into the Hall, into which 150 women (many with several children) were huddled together. These cowards were promptly turned out by an officer, who threatened to shoot the first man who repeated the offence. During the following day, wagons loaded with furniture, and accompanied by the families who owned them, kept pouring in from every part of the country, till there was no longer the slightest doubt that the natives all over Matabeleland were up in arms, and murdering every white man, woman, and child they came across. Tales of fearful massacre and hairbreadth escapes reached the ears of the inhabitants day by day, while the reports of the various patrols and Mr. Colenbrander's spies, made it evident that an attack upon Bulawayo might be expected at any moment.

No time was lost in perfecting the means of defence in every possible way. The Rhodesia Horse was disbanded,

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and a new force, composed of every man capable of lifting a rifle, was formed. This was called the Bulawayo Field Force, and was composed of about fourteen troops, including an Artillery Troop, Engineer Troop, Grey's Scouts, Dawson's Scouts, and the Afrikander Corps. The whole regiment was under the command of Colonel Spreckley, Lieutenant-Colonel Gifford being second in command, and Captain Carden adjutant. The various troops had their headquarters in different parts of the town, but one and all turned out at sunset for laager or outpost duty. Williams' Buildings—an unfinished, double-storied edifice, from the top of which a fine view of the surrounding country could be had—was transformed into a post of observation, and connected by telephone with the Staff Office in the main laager.

In the meantime, improvements to the laager were being carried out most energetically, and in a few days it could have successfully resisted the assault of any number of Matabele. The following description, taken from the *Rhodesia Review*, gives a very good idea of the defences of Bulawayo on April 11th :—

"To the North : the Gaol, where a considerable amount of work has been done with a view to making it a useful outpost. Strong staging has been erected inside at each corner, and sandbags placed on the wall and against the main entrance for the protection of the men and to prevent the gates from being burst in. Water can be procured in good quantity from the well in the prison precincts, and there is a good supply of provisions in the store room. A special staging has been erected in the south-east corner for a seven-pounder. There is plenty of room for a garrison of 50 men, and Mr. Bissett has 100 Cape Boys already camped on the Queen's Ground.

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"To the West: Williams' Consolidate Buildings have been transformed into a very strong fort, and the top of the second storey into an observatory, with telephone and heliograph station. The windows in the lower storey are bricked up half-way, loopholes being left to fire out of. The main entrance is fortified by a falling wooden portcullis, very strongly made of nine-inch timber and loopholed. At the rear of the building facing the west is a Gardner machine-gun, mounted on the roof of the first storey, thus commanding the situation. About 100 men are stationed permanently in the building, under the command of Captain Halsted and Lieutenant Stuart.

"From the observatory the view extends for a radius of ten miles all round, and is thus well fitted for signalling purposes, while any suspicious occurrence within the extended range of sight can be communicated at once to the main laager. It would be utterly impossible for an impi of even moderate strength to approach the town during the day, or, if such a thing did occur, we should have ample time to get all the inhabitants into laager and all the troops under arms.

"To the South of the town we have the Hospital, which is fortified by sand-bags back and front, and a demilune of sand-bags on the flank facing the Mafeking Road. The guard here has recently been augmented to 60 men, under Lieutenant Anderson and Sub-Lieutenant Marquand. Further down, right on the Mafeking Road, Captain Pittendrigh has established a substantial laager, which, upon the return of Captain Brand, will be held by 100 men of the Afrikander Corps.

"Finally, we have the Market Square laager, which, in the opinion of all experienced men, is impregnable against any number of armed men. Should such a body succeed

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in entering the town by surprise—a most improbable event—and should they attempt to rush the laager, they would find themselves thrown into confusion by about twenty feet of barbed-wire network, strongly attached to stumps firmly driven into the ground. They would then have either to scale or demolish a strong barbed-wire fence. Should they succeed in surmounting these obstacles—which, bear in mind, would have to be done under a galling fire of magazine rifles and machine guns—they would find their rush arrested right under the muzzles of the guns by another lot of barbed-wire netting of a width of about fifteen feet. Those who attacked the machine guns would have to face the additional obstacle afforded by broken glass strewn all round them, in addition to the barbed wire.

"To surmount all these mantraps, with about 200 men and at least one machine gun playing on them from each side of the laager—to say nothing of the shells from the seven-pounders and Hotchkiss—would need an enemy possessed of more tactical resources than our present foes.

"The available force under arms at present, including Captain Brand's absent troop, is about 850 men. Many of these are old South African fighters. In addition to these, we have about a dozen machine guns and seven-pounders. The effective total of horses is about 680."

The accommodation in the main laager was, however, very limited. The number of private wagons, in which whole families lived, increased every day, and soon formed a triple row inside the line of wagons manned by the troops. A wall of iron pipes protected the Staff Offices in which the ammunition was kept, while a similar barricade

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Brand's Troop.

Face p. 22.

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was erected right across the laager below the building which, serving as it did to shelter the women, children, and invalids, it was deemed necessary to render proof against the stray bullets of any sharpshooters who might hide in the bushes on the suburban stands over the stream Matsh'amhlope.

Even when the situation was most precarious, a good many people preferred to live at their own homes, to endure the discomfort of the laager. Occasionally, when any special alarm was given, those in the town, with very few exceptions, would crowd into the enclosure of wagons, and the place would be literally covered with human beings lying on the ground packed like sardines.

During the day, save for the troop on duty, the laager would be deserted; but towards the evening, the inhabitants began trooping in, and it was one ceaseless flow of people until about seven o'clock. At five o'clock the various troops detailed for laager and outpost duty were paraded in the space between the wagons and the outer fence, and marched off to their respective positions. At nine o'clock the call to arms sounded, when the officer commanding, accompanied by his staff, walked round the lines and inspected the men and guns.

After this inspection no one could leave the laager on any pretext, without a special pass, until six o'clock the next morning.

As it is the habit of the Matabele to attack about half an hour before sunrise, the "stand to arms" was sounded a second time, and the members of the staff again personally assured themselves that all was in order. The nights were bitterly cold, and the duty of turning out of the blankets in the bleak morning hours was not looked upon with unalloyed delight.

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After the first few nights, it was arranged that the ringing of the Market bell was to be the signal for all the inhabitants to retire within the laager. When this was heard, the streets of the town presented a scene of the

CAPTAIN VAN NIEKERK.

wildest excitement and confusion. Men and women hurrying hither and thither on the general principle of *sauve qui peut.* Whimpering children dragged and carried. Anxious inquiries as to the cause of the alarm.

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Some of the more provident were to be seen laden with what articles of property, provisions, and valuables they were able to carry. Others caring for nothing so long as their immediate safety was assured. From all points of the compass the startled inhabitants, impelled by the dominant instinct of self-preservation, made for the common shelter in the centre of the town.

Imagine a room about the size of a small provincial town hall in England, crowded, or rather packed, with some 200 women and children, all of whom had left their homes at a moment's notice. Hustled together in confusion, with barely space to sit down, sleep being out of the question, the long weary watches of the night were spent in utmost wretchedness by the unfortunate inmates. A woman with two small children—one an infant in arms—who was forced to seek the shelter of the laager under such conditions, supplies a pathetic account of the hardships undergone by herself and others. "Some of the men," said she, "were more frightened than the women. About twenty of them one night broke open the doors of the building and rushed in, but were soon sent to the right-about. Another time a miserable little Jew managed to creep in unobserved, and concealed himself under a blanket until morning. When he was discovered he had a bad time of it. My husband at this time was out on patrol, and I had to manage as best I could. My baby died simply for the want of proper nourishment—preserved milk and maizena, the only things it could take, being unprocurable; and a friend of mine lost hers from the same cause. All of us who were able, acted as nurses, and did what lay in our power to alleviate the sufferings of those worse off than ourselves. After a while I got desperate, and determined not to go into laager again until

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I actually saw the niggers coming, preferring rather to risk matters by remaining at home, than undergo further suffering in that awful laager."

The men slept under the wagons, whilst those women who were unable to find room in the building, had perforce to spend the night beneath the verandahs, there being sometimes as many as fifty there at a time. All those who could obtain one, had their own private wagons. In case of attack every man had his allotted place to occupy and defend. Many of them had rifles, the remainder being armed with shot guns loaded with " buck."

In addition to the means of defence provided as already described, dynamite mines were laid in several streets adjacent to the Market Square. These mines were laid across the ground between the Maatjeseumshlope stream and the western side of the laager, behind such buildings as would have afforded shelter from the guns to any attacking force. They were ten in number, each mine being charged with from 200 to 300 lbs. of dynamite, and connected with the battery in the sheet-iron conning tower perched on the summit of the Market Hall roof. Much anxiety was displayed as to the effect which the explosion of these mines might have on the laager itself, but an expert report published in the papers, calmed the fears of the inhabitants. As a matter of fact, it is said by those who are since in a position to know, that it was the presence of these mysterious mines which prevented in a great measure, any attack on the Bulawayo laager.

Another, the Dutch laager, was now constructed near the service reservoirs, which was manned by the Afrikander Corps, and had for its defence a Maxim and a seven-pounder. Water was also laid on to the main laager in the Market Square through pipes, from various wells in the

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town; while Captain Brand's ("C" Troop) built a small laager of their own in the south-west corner of the town, with a seven-pounder mounted in such a manner as to command the approaches from Napier's Farm.

From the beginning of April to the end of May there was one succession of fights around Bulawayo. After Inspector Southey's desperate defence of the Inseza Store with barely twenty men, and Brand's tragic running fight through the Matojeni Hills on the Tuli Road, in which Captain Van Niekerk rendered such signal service, came Lieutenant-Colonel Gifford's fight at Fonseca's Farm, in which that officer received a wound which necessitated the amputation, at the shoulder, of his right arm, and in which Captain Lumsden was mortally wounded. Captain Macfarlane, who from the number of patrols he relieved came to be called the "relieving officer," had two good fights on the Umguza. In the second of these, on April 25th, with 200 white men and 100 Cape Boys, he gave battle to about 3,000 rebels, and after several hours' hard fighting defeated the enemy with severe loss. Numerous other engagements took place within sight of Bulawayo, sorties being made from the town almost daily by the Bulawayo Field Force. After a while it was a common occurrence for a detachment of troopers to go out in the early morning, shoot down some rebels, and return to breakfast. It was all in the day's work.

What rebel spies were caught were summarily tried and hanged. There is a tree, known as the hanging tree, to the north of the town, which did service as gallows. Hither the doomed men were conveyed. On the ropes being fastened to their necks, they were made to climb along an overhanging branch, and thence were pushed or compelled to jump into space after "a last look at Bula-

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wayo." Their bodies were left suspended for twenty-four hours. This adoption of "Lynch Law" in Bulawayo may not commend itself to the ultra-humane ideas associated with Exeter Hall, but it must be borne in mind that swift and decisive punishment was the only way to overawe the rebels, and actions which under other conditions might be regarded as brutal were justifiable—nay, absolutely essential—at such times as these.

On the first outbreak of the rebellion most of the native police deserted and joined the rebels, taking with them such arms and ammunition as they were able to lay hands on, and more than this, an expert knowledge of how to use them, acquired from their white instructors who had been at no small pains to make them efficient.

During the period preceding the arrival of the Matabeleland Relief Force, Colonels Napier and Spreckley made several expeditions to the Filabusi, Inseza, and Shangani Districts. Colonel Napier's patrol to the latter was undertaken in order to meet the Salisbury Relief Column which was escorting Mr. Rhodes to Bulawayo, where this gentleman arrived towards the end of May.

Much anxiety was felt as to the fate of Captain Laing and the Belingwe garrison, but news was received that that officer, with his small troop of armed prospectors, was safely laagered at Belingwe Store, having found it impracticable to break through the Inseza rebels with so slender a force. A column from Tuli and Victoria eventually proceeded to the relief of Captain Laing and his men, and the combined forces came into Bulawayo more than two months after the outbreak of hostilities.

Gwelo township was laagered up and formed its small population into a defence force, which did good work in the surrounding districts.

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A Court-martial Parade in Market Square, Buluwayo.

Face p. 28.

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The coach service between Mafeking and Bulawayo was kept up throughout by Messrs. Zeederberg. Forts were built at intervals of six and ten miles all down the road as far as Mangwe, while Khama's offer of an escort of his Bamangwatos for each coach, was gladly accepted by the authorities.

Strange to say, the rebels from start to finish of the rebellion never attempted to blockade the Mangwe Pass. Had such an event occurred, the situation would have been rendered even more precarious than it already was. The explanation of this defect in their military tactics was explained by them later. They left the Pass open to allow such white men as should survive their murderous onslaught, to leave the country once and for ever. As a matter of fact, the force which, under Captain Selous, went down the Mafeking Road to build the forts, was looked upon by the rebels as the vanguard of the retreating whites.

It may be mentioned here that M'Quati, the principal "Umtan M'limo" (child of the M'limo), had already "set his seal" upon Government House as his future abode.

The number of rebels arrayed against the settlers in Matabeleland was estimated by Father Prestige at 100,000. This brave Jesuit Father went alone into the hill districts, and succeeded in bringing in several indunas, who by this act were removed from the evil influences of the insurgent chiefs.

Coach communication between Salisbury and Bulawayo was stopped early in the rebellion, two coaches being "stuck up" by the rebels, the occupants of which narrowly escaped with their lives, by taking to the bush and ultimately joining Colonel Napier's patrol. The Tuli Road was

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closed at the very commencement of hostilities, the last coach that passed that way narrowly escaping severe treatment at the hands of the impi which afterwards nearly cut up Brand's patrol.

It will thus be seen that the town of Bulawayo was cut off on all sides except the southern road to Mafeking. The rinderpest, moreover, greatly hampered the transport riders, and it was extremely difficult to get goods up to Bulawayo. Whenever anything was pressingly required, it had to be sent by coach and paid for at the rate of 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb.

During the siege of Bulawayo provisions of all kinds were only obtainable at famine prices. Some idea as to the prevailing scarcity of everything outside the barest necessities, may be gathered from the following statement supplied by the Market master, Mr. Freeman Thomas, under whose hammer the various articles were "knocked down" at the morning market to the highest bidder.

"We never missed one morning through the whole disturbance," said he. "The market was carried on inside the laager. Niggers or no niggers, the people had to live. Considering the difficulties to be contended against, there was generally a very fair supply. Most of the vegetables were grown and put on the market by the Indian coolies. Unlike the mode adopted at home, everything is put up to auction by the Market master. When the town was in laager, competition of bidders for such articles as came under the head of luxuries was keen, and led to what may be regarded as record prices. The biggest price I ever got for eggs was 74*s.* per dozen; one cauliflower fetched 32*s.* 6*d.*; a bottle of milk, 30*s.*; fowls, £1 each; potatoes, £30 per bag; small bunches of carrots, turnips, etc., 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.* each, or at about the rate of 5*s.* per lb. Eggs have always

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been scarce since the rising, and even now range at prices between 18*s.* and 30*s.* per dozen. In ordinary times the market is a profitable concern, the monthly turn-over occasionally being as much as £2,000."

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CHAPTER II

Humours of the Situation

A Self-Appointed Defender—A Curious Night Patrol—Its Termination—Eccentric Conduct of one of the Bulawayo Garrison—The War Balloon—A Rhodesian Eiffel Tower—The Search Light—Alarm at Boer Laager.

THE Matabele Rebellion, with all its numerous horrors and alarms, was not without its leavening of humour.

On the very first night—the ever-memorable 25th of March—few people felt disposed to appreciate the ridiculous. One picket, however, stationed on the outskirts of the town, was enlivened by a visit from an individual who was evidently labouring under the delusion that upon his efforts, and his only, depended the safety of Bulawayo that night. Needless to add that his laudable ambition was greatly stimulated, if not induced, by alcohol. He was just in the vein to challenge the whole Matabele nation to mortal combat. Shortly after the pickets were thrown out, while the bulk of the inhabitants still imagined that the rebels were in the immediate neighbourhood of the town and that an attack at any time was not improbable, the sergeant in charge of the guard had occasion to visit the sentries at the Matsh'amhlope Bridge. On arriving there, he found the two sentries in violent altercation with an individual who appeared to have the greatest difficulty in retaining his equilibrium. He was in possession of a

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Lee-Metford rifle, with which, so far as his condition permitted, he was going through various portions of the "manual" in a spasmodic manner, as if wound up by clockwork. The sergeant inquired of the sentries what the curious apparition meant. His get-up was distinctly original, and consisting as it did of a cricket cap, an R.H.V. tunic buttoned up anyhow, whilst his nether limbs were encased in loose baggy pyjamas. With a ludicrous assumption of military dignity, he drew himself up at attention, saluting the sergeant with his left hand, and stated with apparent satisfaction, "All (*hic*) present and (*hic*) cor(*hic*)-rect." To clinch this he added, "I've been (*hic*) to the Cemetery (*hic*) and the Brewery and the Gaol, and I've come to report, All present (*hic*) and cor(*hic*)rect." As a matter of fact this was perfectly true. He had made the circuit described (the Cemetery is quite two miles out of town), and this at a time when most people hardly felt safe outside the Market Square. It subsequently transpired that in his wanderings he had met two of the Scouts, and taking them for the enemy, was very nearly firing on them. Upon the sergeant trying to disarm him, he presented the rifle, but the two troopers closing on him succeeded in confiscating the weapon and so prevented any further antics on the part of this eccentric character. On examination the gun was found to be not only loaded but at the full-cock!

The eccentric behaviour of a young fellow about this time whose physique and antecedents should have stood him in better stead, created some amusement not unmixed with contempt. Many who read this will doubtless remember the incidents of this gentleman's hurried departure without the need of further disclosing his identity. Constantly haunted with the dread of meeting an untimely

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death at the hands of the Matabele, his fears developed into a sort of mania. He knew to a fraction of a second how long it would take him to reach the laager from any given point in the town, should he have to run for it, and it is said he did occasional sprints to keep himself in training for such an event.

One night he was playing cards in a room adjacent to the laager, where he was fairly safe, as two runs and a jump would land him within the enclosure. Luck had favoured him, and his winnings were represented by quite a pile of I.O.U.'s. In the middle of the game the door of the room was burst open, admitting two individuals, who called out, "Run for your lives! The Matabele are on us!" Our hero waited for no more, but jumped up and made a bolt for the laager. Meanwhile the others quietly pocketed the I.O.U.'s and waited. Presently he returned, declaring it was a hoax, and on inquiring for the missing papers was told they must have been lost in the excitement, and this was all the satisfaction he got.

As time went on, the feeling of impending dissolution waxed stronger and stronger, and then with the courage born of despair, this individual decided to quit Bulawayo, the only trouble being that he would very probably be exposed to more danger on the road down than if he remained in the town. Being possessed of more money than pluck, he hired a private cart and mules, and with a promise of £500 prevailed on several men to arm themselves and escort him down the road as far as Mangwe. He even attempted to obtain the loan of a Maxim from the Government. He was duly escorted beyond the confines of danger, and later on arrived safely at Mafeking. Here his fame as a flyer had already preceded him, and he was led to believe that the Kaffirs in that neighbour-

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hood were on the point of rising. Not safe yet, he lost no time in booking a seat for Capetown, where, on his arrival, he gave out for general information, without prejudice, that all the inhabitants of Bulawayo had been massacred, and that he had narrowly escaped with his life.

Readers of the Classics will remember the brazen bull, mentioned by Virgil, invented by an ingenious artificer for the amusement of the king of the country. This graven image was hollow, and had its mouth open wide enough to admit of a man being inserted. Upon a fire being lighted under the figure, the screams of the tortured man inside were to simulate the bellowing of the animal. The king to whom it was presented admired it greatly, and on the device being explained he ordered that the inventor should be the first man thrust in. One is forcibly reminded of this story by that of the war balloon, the idea of which was originated by a certain genial-faced and very portly professional gentleman of Bulawayo. Upon the Administrator being approached on the subject, the necessary expense was authorised on condition that the originator of the idea should be the first man to go up in the machine. To make the gas-holder, every available piece of dress silk in town was purchased, the maker evidently being under the mistaken impression that that was the proper material. This was covered with four coats of varnish, and when the balloon was completed a trial was made by the proud inventor. Alas for the golden hopes of engineer and expectant public! It was found that dress silk, even coated with much varnish, will not stand the pressure of imprisoned gas, and so that scheme was relegated to the might-have-beens. The most ingenious part of the whole apparatus was the gas-generating plant. Unable to make it in the usual way, by the reaction of acid on zinc, the

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expedient of passing steam through a number of red-hot pipes was resorted to. This answered perfectly, and large volumes of hydrogen were generated—alas! to no purpose.

This same engineer was, however, not to be defeated. If he could not rise in the world in the car of a war balloon, he would climb nearer the clouds on an Eiffel Tower of his own. With the object of being able to communicate with Figtree — distant about thirty miles — by heliograph, he induced the long-suffering Government to expend a considerable sum in building a mighty tower of iron pipes, eighty feet high. When it was built, however, it was discovered that no account had been taken of the fact that Bulawayo is surrounded by high hills, and that another eighty feet would have to be scaled before the tower was available for the purpose for which it was built. The structure, which was never of any practical use, and which was known by the name of the inceptor as ——'s Folly, remained standing to the end of the rebellion.

Another gentleman, not, it must be confessed, lacking in enterprise, constructed a search light which was placed on the top of the Market building. It was an arrangement of some ingenuity, the light being produced by magnesian ribbon. This no doubt would have been a success, but for one thing: the light so caused had the effect of illuminating the operator and his immediate surroundings, but threw everything else into deeper obscurity by contrast. As a stage effect the thing was a marvel, but this was scarcely the object desired.

One individual is reported to have safely reached the shelter of laager, taking with him most of his worldly property, but found in the hurry of the moment he had forgotten to bring his wife!

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Matabeleland Native Police. Non.-Coms.

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Another man was hurrying down the street towards the Square, when it suddenly occurred to him that he had left the door of his house unlocked, whereupon he sent back his better-half to make it secure!

One night the inhabitants were startled by heavy firing in the direction of the Dutch laager. People rushed here and there to learn the cause, and were relieved to find it was only a scare. Next morning a number of donkeys were found lying dead near the laager. It appears they had been quietly browsing round the enclosure, when an over-anxious sentry, mistaking them for rebels, commenced firing on them. There was, however, genuine ground for alarm, although this is not generally known. On mentioning the incident to Mr. Colenbrander, he stated that he and some others, on going over the ground next morning, came across indisputable proof that natives had been there during the night, their fresh spoor being very distinct owing to a slight shower of rain having fallen. Not unlikely they had driven up the animals to cover their advance, and decamped when they imagined themselves discovered.

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CHAPTER III

Massacres and Hairbreadth Escapes

Arthur Cummings' Narrative—Carruthers' Escape—The Adventures of a Lower Gwelo Party—Sub-Inspector Chesnaye's Story—Graham's Last Stand—Gallant Conduct of a Young German.

ACTING on the fiat of the M'limo and the counsellors of the nation, to "slay and spare not," the Matabele and their Maholi dependants formed themselves into marauding gangs, or impis, and commenced their work of massacre and destruction. They confined their attentions at first to attacks on isolated parties, families, and individuals, and the success of their fiendish plans is principally apparent in the official list of killed and missing, every line of which forms the text of a tragedy.

How completely unanimous and simultaneous was the rising in all parts of the country, at places separated from each other by hundreds of miles, is proof enough that it was premeditated. The ease with which they surprised so many of their white victims further shows that, although the rising must have been a common topic of discussion amongst the natives months before it really occurred, so great was the secrecy observed, that with few exceptions no suspicions were aroused, and it was not until the dead bodies of murdered whites were lying around stores and wagons, that the survivors awoke to the fact that death or flight were the only alternatives before them. Without

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attempting to describe in detail the vile atrocities, the acts of devilish cruelty and torture, or the cold-blooded manner in which so many white people, without regard to age or sex, were done to death by their savage assailants, and which are too unspeakably ghastly to be more than hinted at, a few instances of hairbreadth escapes from the hands of the Matabele, as related by some of the principal characters themselves, may be of interest.

An Account by Arthur Cummings.

"The first intimation I received of the rising of the natives happened in this way. I had ridden a bicycle down to the spot where my camp was, about forty-five miles from Bulawayo on the Filabusi Road. Here I had left my wagon and oxen in charge of a Cape Boy. On arriving there, the first thing that attracted my attention was the dead body of the boy, all hacked about, lying just outside the hut.

"It appears that when I left the place for Bulawayo, a few days before, Fezella, an induna, and two other natives came up to the camp and inquired of a Matabele youngster (whom I employed to lead the oxen) what had become of all the white men. He told them, in reply, that they had gone to Bulawayo, and asked them what they wanted. They said they had ten shillings, and wished to buy a blanket. Next they inquired where the Cape Boy was. The latter was down at the river at the time, and on learning this, they told the youngster to run away, as they were going to kill the boy. Instead of doing so, however, he went down to where the boy was, and told him what the natives had said. The boy remarked that he did not care, and was not afraid of dying. He then went straight to the hut, where the three natives set upon him with

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sticks, and after battering him about, left him for dead. Next they went to the wagon, and taking from it my three guns, walked away. Later in the day they returned, and finding that the boy had revived, they split his chest open with an axe. Then they looted everything they could lay their hands on, and drove the oxen away. These facts were related to me by the youngster, who saw the whole affair.

"Seeing how things were, I decided to return at once, and on reaching a store two miles along the road back I sent word by a runner to my brother, who was at a store down at Filabusi, also to Native Commissioner Bentley at that place, briefly reporting the murder and looting. Scarcely had the messenger left, when a native came in and told us they were all murdered down there. Lucas and I realised the danger of any further delay, and promptly started off on foot for Bulawayo. Having no arms, we thought it safer to leave the road and take to the hills. By ten o'clock that night we reached Irving's Store, distant about twenty-two miles from town. We warned all who were there, and asked them to pass on the warning to as many as possible in the district; then we came on to town and reported the matter to the authorities."

Details of the murders at Cummings' Store at Filabusi were obtained by Arthur Cummings from Maduna (a native chief in that district) a few weeks after peace was declared. He said there was only one man he wanted to save, and that was Native Commissioner Bentley. Early in the morning he despatched three of his young men with a message, asking him to come over to the kraal. His intention was to tie him up when he arrived, and after all the others were killed to allow him to escape on his own horse to Belingwe. When, however, the three messengers

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reached the camp, they found that Bentley as well as the others, had already been murdered. Maduna and his men then set off to kill Ivers and party at the Celtic mine. Ivers was killed outright, and another man, named Ottens, shot in the back; a third, O'Connor, they attacked with sticks. He started running away, but dropped three times from sheer exhaustion, and, as a last chance, jumped down

KILLED OUTRIGHT.

an inclined shaft 140 feet deep. His pursuers, not to be baulked in their designs, threw dynamite down the opening, and left him for dead. But at the extreme moment luck favoured him, and he managed to creep into a drive where he was sheltered from the explosion. At night he made his way out and escaped. Maduna's astonishment, when Cummings assured him that this very man was alive and

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walking about Bulawayo, was intense; it was some time before he would credit it. On leaving O'Connor, Maduna went on to say, he heard a lot of firing in the direction of the store, and on going there with his party, found all had been killed with the exception of Carpenter. This man Carpenter had his gun and ammunition, and was keeping the natives at bay single-handed. On seeing a reinforcement of the enemy approaching, he set fire to the thatched verandah at the back of the store. He then rushed inside and shut the door. With the butt of his gun he smashed the front window and fought through the opening. He succeeded in killing three of his assailants. When the store became too hot for him to remain any longer, he sprang out and ran towards the river, where with his back against a tree he made a stand, facing his pursuers and forcing them to keep their distance with continuous and well-directed shots.

The natives, not feeling desirous of coming to close quarters with this desperate white man, sent some of their number to call in the assistance of deserters from the Native Police—the very ones who had been stationed at the place for its protection. These soon after arrived on the scene bringing their rifles, and with a volley at long range they put an end to poor Carpenter's career. Maduna, when describing this tragic episode, referred in glowing terms of admiration to the dogged pluck and brave defence exhibited by Carpenter—for a Matabele can respect a brave man, though he spare him not—and gave his opinion that had there been two such, they would probably have escaped. It may be added that Carpenter had been down with fever, and consequently was too weak to run far, otherwise his legs might have saved his life. The other victims of this massacre were,

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P. Cummings (brother of Arthur Cummings), Woods, E. C. Edkins, and Baragwanath. Their remains later on were found and buried on the spot where they fell. Arthur Cummings states that his bicycle, which he was obliged to leave behind, ultimately fell into the hands of the rebels, and now does duty as a plaything for some Matabele piccaninies in the Matoppo Hills.

CARRUTHERS' ESCAPE.

One Carruthers was making his way from Mabele to the Gwanda. He had been warned of the rising by an old woman. On the road he fell in with a party of natives, and being parched with thirst, asked them to give him a drink of water. They stood some distance away at first, and refused to come near him. Just then, however, some others joined them, and one of these volunteered to take him some water. He approached Carruthers bearing a big calabash full. To drink from the calabash two hands were necessary. Carruthers, without any suspicion of treachery, rested the butt of his rifle on the ground with the muzzle leaning against his chest, and stretched out his hands to grasp the calabash. As he did so the native seized the rifle and ran off. Carruthers did likewise, but in the opposite direction. The natives then fired on him with his own gun, and with others they had at hand. He managed to outrun them all with the exception of one, a young fellow who kept on shouting to the others to bring him a gun, as he had only an assegai. After running some distance, Carruthers turned round and offered to give his pursuer some money as a bribe. In the meantime Carruthers had picked up two stones. The native replied, "All right; give me the money," upon which Carruthers

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took some silver out of his purse, and placing it on a stone, ran on a space. But this did not conclude the bargain, for the native, after picking up the money, continued the chase, at the same time calling to him to hand over his purse as well. In reply to this demand, Carruthers said, "Very well, here it is," at the same time throwing the purse as far as he could into the long grass. The ruse was successful, the native stopped to look for the purse, and while he was so engaged Carruthers made his escape good. He ultimately reached Matebes, having run about fifteen miles, where he joined two others, and the party arrived safely at Victoria.

A Narrow Escape from the Lower Gwelo.

The following account of how W. H. Davis and six others ran the gauntlet through the rebel lines, is of special interest, as they were last to come into Bulawayo from the outside, arriving so late as April 10th, when the Matabele impis were massed on the outskirts of the town. Davis thus tells the story :—

"We first," said he, "received warning of the native rising on the 31st March.

"That day I went in from my camp to Rose's Store, and on arriving there, was surprised to see them all packing up.

"Inquiring the reason, they told me as they were loading the cart—for they were in too much of a hurry to stop working—that, an hour or so before, a native boy had rushed into the store, evidently in great fright, with most of his clothes torn off him. He was very excited, and was the bearer of some startling news. Rose, who spoke Kaffir fluently, questioned the boy, who said he

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was one of Hammond's party which had started out for Bulawayo a day or two before.

"A. R. Hammond, the manager of Hammond's Matabeleland Syndicate, had been on a visit to this district to superintend the Rose Reef, where they were sinking the main shaft, and to inspect the 'Arctic' Claims, in company with H. N. Palmer, who had recently been appointed to succeed him in the management of the property. These two had left as stated on the Sunday, in a spring wagon drawn by six or eight mules. Their baggage-wagon followed them on several hours later. With the latter were two miners, by name of Johnson (not related), another named Rowe, and several 'boys' from the Claim going into town sick or discharged. All these, the boy stated, had been killed by the Matabele between the Vunku and Shangani Rivers, and he alone with great difficulty had managed to escape. It afterwards transpired that both Hammond and Palmer were set upon by the natives, and murdered further along the road, at the Shangani Drift. There was no time to be lost, as the rebels might be down upon us at any minute, so the sooner we were off the better. By mid-day we had the Scotch cart loaded, the oxen inspanned, and were on the road for Gwelo, distant between sixty and seventy miles. Our party consisted of—Rose, the storekeeper; Langton, his assistant; Mason, an engineer employed by Hammond; Gill, Neill, and Burmeister, mining contractors; and myself. There were also several Cape Boys and natives. We were armed with five Martini-Henry rifles and two Winchester repeaters, and from fifteen to twenty rounds of ammunition per man. We trekked that day until dark, reaching Hinckesman's Camp, a distance of about sixteen miles. Nothing of

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note happened that day or the next. On the third day we crossed the Gwelo River, getting on to the Hartley Hills (about seven miles south of Harbord's Store), where we camped till midnight. Then we inspanned and proceeded to Harbord's Store on the Ingwenia River. Here, as we approached, we almost instinctively knew there was something wrong. There were no lights and not a soul was to be seen. From a tent near by a horrible smell was emitted, and on further investigation we found the remains of a white man, who we afterwards learned was Fitzpatrick, a surveyor. The inside of the store bore evidence that it had been left in a hurry. Just behind the door was another dead body. Nothing had been looted in the store so far as we could judge by appearance. We left this place about three o'clock in the morning, and trekked on for six miles or so, when we reached a big mining camp near the roadside. Here the same sickening stench met our nostrils, caused by the dead bodies of Harbord, Barr, and two others, which we discovered on the ground behind some wagons. Leaving this ghastly scene, we hurried along with all speed. Two miles further on, the road, which up till then had been fairly smooth, became rough and stony, and the cart, as it jolted and tumbled over the loose boulders, made a good deal of noise. This was anything but desirable, as we were just passing by Mavani's Kraal, and Mavani was a chief of distinctly bad reputation. Our fears were soon realised. As we crossed a mealie field two shots were fired, but fortunately did no damage. Those riding on the cart at once jumped down. Then the natives opened fire on us from the left side, which we returned, taking cover the while as much as possible on the other side of the cart. At the first shots our boys

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all ran away. Our leading oxen were shot through the body, but did not drop, and we kept on with the cart until the polers fell, when there was nothing left but to run for our lives. This we did, the natives, meanwhile, following us and firing. Once they made a rush to close on us, but we kept them off with a volley. The nearest cover at hand was an ant-hill. We made for this, and held it until we found the natives were working round to cut us off in front, when we started running again, and came on to a sort of flat. Up till then we had been fighting in the dark, and now by the grey light of dawn we were better able to see what we were doing. As we ran, one shot, which proved to be a parting one, was fired at us; and then, to our surprise and intense relief, the natives gave up the chase. The reason for their sudden withdrawal was no doubt a desire to get back to the cart and loot its contents, as they probably thought they would be able to follow us up later on, and if not, we were fairly certain to fall into the hands of other rebels. Be this as it may, we were devoutly thankful for the respite. Had they kept up their pursuit, they must have caught up with and overpowered us very soon, as we were all much exhausted with running, and would have been compelled to make a last stand. Again, had any of the shots taken effect and wounded one of our party as we were running, it would have been certain death for all, as we were bound to keep together."

"But our troubles were not all over by a long way; we had yet to travel over miles of country infested by armed rebels, and our chances of ever reaching a place of safety seemed very small indeed. We went on and crossed the Gwelo River again, eight miles from the spot where we were attacked, and then rested for the remainder

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of the day. As we lay under a bush we saw two small parties of natives, a dozen or so in each, pass by at a distance of not more than 200 yards from where we were; but luckily they did not notice us. To add to our danger of being discovered, we had four dogs with us, and were desperately afraid they would betray our whereabouts by barking. They kept quiet, however; but the risk was too great, so next day we strangled three of them, reserving one, if need be, to eat. Keeping the Hartley Hills Road we headed for Bulawayo, deciding that it would be safer to make for that place than for Gwelo. We reached the Bembeze River without incident. By this time we were half famished, as, since the first night we had eaten no food except berries, wild apples, and 'maroolas,' a kind of wild plum. Falling in with a swarm of locusts, we had a good feed; they were not at all unpalatable; we pulled their heads and wings off, and filled our pockets with them.

"One morning, as we were resting after our night march (for we had to do all our travelling under cover of the darkness, concealing ourselves amongst rocks or bushes during the day), a native with a gun over his shoulder sauntered by not 150 yards away. He did not observe us, although the country was fairly open. Had he looked round, his life would have paid forfeit for doing so, as all seven of us had him covered with rifles.

"The last part of the journey proved to be the most critical time of all. Near the Lebani Hills we encountered a native woman, who, on seeing us, ran away, while we were debating whether to shoot her or not. That night we had to pass right through the rebel impis lying in the Lebani Hills. We scarcely dared hope to dodge them successfully, and there must have been thousands camped there. Go which way we would, we heard dogs barking,

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and natives dancing, singing, and talking. When daylight broke we found ourselves two or or three miles from Jenkins' Store under a big hill. Concealing ourselves under the best cover we could find, we rested ourselves awhile. Presently we were startled by the sound of the big war horn on the hill just above us; then we thought our time had come. I know I placed the muzzle of a revolver against my head, with the determination to blow out my brains directly the rebels rushed upon us. In those few minutes of awful suspense I learned what the fear of death meant. But again we were left unmolested; the war horn which we took for our death knell had no connection with us. By exercising the utmost caution, and keeping out of sight as much as the nature of the country would permit, we managed to evade the rebels, and the following day we reached Bulawayo, where we found our friends had long given up all hope for our safety.

"The terrible strain of those ten days, with our nerves strung at highest tension all the time, was an experience never to be forgotten, and, I devoutly trust, never to be repeated. It was some weeks before we recovered from the physical and mental exhaustion we had undergone."

C. P. CHESNAYE'S STORY.

The following account of Sub-Inspector Chesnaye's escape from the Queque is told in his own words:—

"It was towards the end of March when a number of us were at the Queque Store, that we received a summons from a trooper in the M.M.P., who warned us that an outbreak of the natives was imminent. A similar warning was given to the prospectors and miners at the Sebakwe mine, who, acting upon it, trekked into our camp. Captain

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Pocock had in the meantime arrived, and I asked him if in his opinion the report was true, whether it was merely a local affair or a general rising? with the result that we came to the conclusion that there was nothing to cause serious alarm. We had about fourteen boys in the camp at the time, and, seeing that there was no uneasiness amongst them, thought it was just a scare. That night however, thinking it best to be on the safe side, we started towards Gwelo. On the way Pocock and myself resolved to call at Harbord's Store, Ingwenia, hoping to find a goodly number of prospectors collected at that place, when, if things were as black as they were painted, we could either proceed all together to Gwelo, or else make a stand at the store.

"We arrived there at dusk, and, on going into the store, asked for Harbord, who, we were told, had already left for Gwelo. We sat there until half-past ten, talking and generally discussing the position of affairs, quite forgetting that if the rebellion were a fact we were in a most precarious situation. Suddenly the silence outside was broken by a shout and a yell, and in rushed, as well as we could judge, about half a score of natives, armed with assegais. The foremost of these made a lunge at Pocock, striking him on the shoulder, but at such an angle that it glanced off. Walker, who was standing behind the counter, took up a bottle—the first weapon of defence handy—and directed a blow at the assailants with it. They, seeing a flash in the dim candlelight probably imagined it to be an arm of some description, and recoiling suddenly, knocking the assegai out of the hand of the native who stabbed Pocock, then the whole gang seemed to be seized with panic, and fled into the open. We had a few rifles, but no ammunition. It then sud-

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denly occurred to one of the party that a surveyor, named Fitzpatrick, who was working in the vicinity, might be in his tent. On rushing out to see, we could hear our would-be murderers shouting to each other in the mealie fields, and on reaching Fitzpatrick's tent, which was a little distance from the store, we found him lying on his bed, stabbed through the throat and heart.

"In order to avoid the natives, who, judging from their shouts, were on the Gwelo Road, our little band started in the only direction apparently open, and by making a detour of forty miles, which we covered in ten hours, eventually reached Gwelo in safety."

Over and above the incidents narrated, which were described to the writer by eye-witnesses of or chief actors in them, there were numberless others far more ghastly in detail, which can never be recorded. In many, very many, cases there were none left to tell the tale of horror associated with the last moments of those whose mutilated and disfigured bodies bore silent witness to the hideous nature of their deaths. What adds tenfold to one's indignation and revolt, is the fact that helpless women and children were to be found in the list of victims. Whole families were hewn down and outraged by the savage rebels. Small parties of settlers, who had been surprised, made a desperate bid for their lives; as, for instance, the last stand of Graham, the Native Commissioner, and his gallant comrades at Inyati, where, after stubbornly fighting until the last cartridges were fired, they finally succumbed to the deadly assegai and battle-axe; or again, the splendid, but hopeless, defence of the West brothers in their store at far-off Thabas Amamba, where with real British grit they kept the enemy at bay for ten long hours, falling at last

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surrounded by the dead bodies of their assailants. Others there were who, like the Cunningham family, were taken by surprise, and slaughtered almost before they had time to realise what was taking place.

Without doubt the case of Dr. and Mrs. Langford was one which helped to steel many a heart, when fighting later against the Matabele. Telling his wife to make her way as best she could to a neighbouring farm where protection was probably to be found, Dr. Langford and a friend, Mr. Lemon, held the rebels in check as long as their ammunition held out, only to be cut down when resistance was no longer possible. Mrs. Langford evidently endeavoured to reach her destination in vain. Her body, bruised with repeated blows, was found lying under a rock in a dry watercourse, where she had obviously crept to hide. It appeared from the manner in which the unfortunate lady's remains were found by a patrol some time after, that she had been stoned to death. It is a satisfaction—a poor one, it is true, but still a satisfaction—that, at the time of writing, the Native Department has just arrested the perpetrators of this fearful deed.

Standing out in bold relief against the background of slaughter and rapine are the many incidents of rare pluck and heroism. Not the least of these is the story of the German family on the Shangani. When the rebel Matabele arrived at the homestead of this farmer, they only found the old man and his wife, whom they quickly despatched, dragging the bodies out of the house and leaving them before the door.

The youngest son, a lad of sixteen, who was staying with his parents while his elder brother rode transport, was out shooting at the time. He suspected nothing, as news of the rising had not yet reached the remote district

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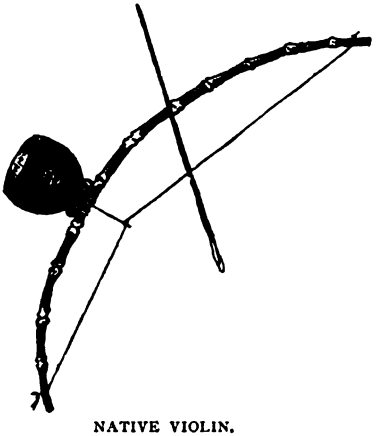
in which they were living. Upon his return he noticed that the house looked deserted, and on closer inspection was horrified to find the dead bodies of his parents in front of the house. With cool determination he took off his bandolier, and, strewing the cartridges on a ledge of granite, rifle in hand awaited the coming of his murderers. His suspense was not of long duration. He was soon observed by the Matabele, who were lying in wait near by. A band of thirty rebels made a rush at him. With the utmost presence of mind he fired again and again, dropping a native each time. So quick and accurate was he, that fourteen of his parents' assassins fell under his fire, the remainder then took to flight. The danger over, the lad proceeded to where his father and mother lay, and was preparing to bury their remains, when a rebel stole up from behind and felled him with a battle-axe. An old native woman, who witnessed the deed, and afterwards related the particulars, stated that the rebels themselves greatly admired the boy's courage, and spoke of him as a true "Amajaka" (warrior).



NATIVE VIOLIN.

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SECTION III

THE MATABELELAND RELIEF FORCE

CHAPTER I

Raising the Force

Recruiting—Organisation—Colonel Plumer in Command—His Staff—Stamp of Men—Earl Grey and the Occupants of a Down Coach—Camp Life—The Horses—The Kit—Details of Detachments—The Departure.

ORGANISATION.

THE news of the rising in Matabeleland and of the peril of the white inhabitants there as the details arrived daily over the wires, created a stir of apprehension and excitement all through the more settled parts of South Africa. The effects of the Jameson Raid and the aggressive attitude of the Boers in the Transvaal became secondary matters of importance for the time being.

Numerous were the conjectures as to whether the Imperial Government would step in and assume the responsibility of saving and safeguarding the lives of British subjects "up North," or, on the other hand, whether the Chartered Company would act independently, and by subduing the rebellion themselves, render the country under the Charter habitable for pioneer settlers.

Offers of gratuitous assistance from all sides, not except-

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ing the Boer Republic, were made to the Directorate of the Company, and Volunteer forces in various parts of the country expressed their readiness to march to the assistance of their fellow-countrymen if required.

But momentous and costly as the undertaking was, the Chartered Company proved equal to the occasion, and, firmly declining all offers of help outside their own resources, determined to see the matter through themselves. The far-seeing diplomacy of Mr. Rhodes recognised the fitness of meeting the emergency with the means possessed and obtainable by the Company he had founded. At the time of the outbreak he was in Mashonaland, pushing forward the construction of the Beira-Salisbury railway, and in other ways using his utmost endeavours to meet the more pressing needs of those living in the country which bears his name. He was not one to shirk the responsibilities of the situation. With characteristic thoroughness he threw himself heart and soul into the task of suppressing the rebellion, accompanied the troops as a deeply interested spectator throughout the campaign, and was directly instrumental in bringing about a peaceful settlement. Whether this settlement is of a temporary or permanent nature has yet to be seen; but whatever the final outcome may be, there are few who, with a knowledge of conditions then existing, would question the wisdom of the course he adopted.

Down country it soon became known that the Chartered Company were enrolling volunteers to form a Relief Force to proceed at once to Matabeleland. The pay offered was *7s. 6d.* per day (including rations) for troopers, whilst that of other ranks was in proportion. Recruiting was commenced at Kimberley and Mafeking on the 6th April, and with the exception of 150 men and 163 horses

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raised at Johannesburg, all recruiting was done at those two places. The original strength of the Force to be raised was set down at 500; but this, under instructions from the High Commissioner, was afterwards increased to 750, in order to include those of the B.S.A. Company's Police who had been sent to England after the Jameson Raid, and were on their way out in detachments. There was no difficulty in obtaining the requisite number of men for immediate active service, and the fact that the first troop left Mafeking on the 12th April—only five days after the enrolment of the first recruits—shows plainly enough that no time was lost.

Mafeking, the chief town of British Bechuanaland and the then northern terminus of the Cape Government Railway, was used as the base of operations, the objective point, Bulawayo, being 585 miles distant.

A military camp was formed outside the township, and thither the members of the new force, horses, mules, wagons, provisions, and equipments, were rapidly brought by rail.

Johannesburg was well to the fore in proffering assistance. Immediately the news from the North was received, meetings were held, and volunteers enrolled. Upwards of 5,000 men and several hundred Cape Boys offered their services. Amongst the former a fair proportion were prepared to throw up lucrative employment and go to the front. Application was then made to the High Commissioner for leave to start, and in due course permission was received for 150 men and horses. It was first suggested that this contingent should march, fully armed and equipped, direct to Mafeking through Dutch territory, and several endeavours were made to induce the Transvaal Government to give their sanction to this course, but with-

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out avail. The Dutch authorities were glad enough to give permission for the men to go, but the mere suggestion of arming and marching through to the border was scouted with contempt. The Republic was still smarting under the recollection of the Jameson episode, and hated and distrusted everything British. It was not in the humour to grant favours of this nature to the "voerdommde uitlander." This being so, the contingent was entrained and travelled by rail to Mafeking by way of De Aar and Kimberley, the journey taking four days. At Mafeking this force was divided into three troops (Nos. 7, 8, and 9), under the respective commands of Captain Fowler, Lieutenant McNicholl, and Captain Murray. The heavy work of organising men and material as they came to hand at Mafeking was carried out under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, an officer whose capability and sound experience, though tried to the utmost, were fully equal to the occasion. To arrange, equip, provide for, and despatch into the field such a force of mounted men, all within twenty days, was no small feat, and would alone have sufficed to establish the reputation of the M.R.F. commander as a military organiser of the highest order. The expedition with which preparations were effected was at the time commented on with surprise and admiration by those who were in a position to know what it entailed.

The following Imperial officers were selected for service with the force :—

Major Herbert Plumer, 2nd Batt. York and Lancaster Regt., in command, with the local rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Captain C. W. Watts, D.A.A.G., Natal, with the local rank of Major.

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Captain Dent.

Signalling Corps.

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Captain F. E. Kershaw, 2nd Batt. York and Lancaster Regt., with the local rank of Major.

Lieutenant Hon. J. Beresford, 7th Hussars, with the local rank of Captain.

Lieutenant K. Fraser, 7th Hussars, with the local rank of Captain.

Captain H. Scott Turner, Black Watch, was appointed Adjutant to the Corps, and subsequently Lieutenant G. D. Wheeler, R.A., joined in command of the Maxim Detachment, with the local rank of Captain, and Lieutenant B. C. Dent, 1st Batt. Leicestershire Regt., as Signalling Officer, also with the local rank of Captain.

It must not be supposed that the Matabeleland Relief Force, raised as it were on the spur of the moment, comprised none but raw recruits. Many of the newly enrolled men were old hands at the game of war. Amongst them were to be found numbers who had put in years of service with the Cape Mounted Rifles, Bechuanaland Border Police, Natal Police, and other corps, whilst not a small proportion had seen active service in other Kaffir wars in Swazieland, Basutoland, and Zululand. Some there were who had taken part in Sir Charles Warren's expedition into Bechuanaland; and others, again, who had already faced the Matabele in the first war, or who had travelled up to Salisbury with the pioneers under Colonel Pennefather in 1888.

In addition were those just fresh from their lively experience with Jameson "over the border," who had received their baptism of fire at the hands of the Boers at Doornkop and Krugersdorp. Beside the above-mentioned, there were not a few however, who had never handled a rifle except for purposes of sport, but who none the less proved themselves worthy of being relied on when the

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time arrived. To conclude, there were individuals who had never backed a horse in their lives before. These latter soon repented of their rashness in joining a force where some previous knowledge of horsemanship, to say the least, was desirable. Many had thrown up good positions to take part in the Campaign, "just for the fun of the thing."

The attractions of an open-air life, change of scenery, with the necessary spice of adventure and danger, combined with a natural curiosity to see the country, were too strong to be resisted.

When it is considered that any man medically fit was eligible for enrolment in the Corps, provided he could ride and shoot—and, as a matter of fact, some were taken on who were equally ignorant of both accomplishments—it is obvious that there was bound to be a fair sprinkling of "wasters," glad to take part in anything promising a livelihood, and prepared to make themselves generally obnoxious to their comrades and officers, whenever the opportunity offered. This is mentioned to explain several things which occurred later on, and which served to cast discredit upon many who were not personally to blame.

The camp at Mafeking consisted of rows of tents pitched on the open veldt near the railway station, half a mile or so from the centre of the town, with an orderly room, stores, stables, and parade grounds. Here everything was strictly regimental. The men as they arrived were formed into troops, and drilled and instructed so far as time would permit. When organised and equipped, they were drafted off to Macloutsie in batches of fifty, under command of an officer.

Hotel-keepers at this time did a great trade; the bars

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were full day and night, and "the guests" were glad to get sleeping accommodation how and where they could. Julius Weil—the universal provider, the Bechuanaland Whiteley—was reaping a rich harvest, and with stores right up the road to Bulawayo, was preparing to take every advantage of the exigencies of the times.

Coaches arriving from the North were loaded with passengers perched on top and bulging out of the windows. These refugees from the scene of the rebellion were *not* all women and children. Earl Grey, then on his way North to take the reins of office as Administrator for the Chartered Company, met one of these coaches as it arrived at its destination crowded with men. He called them severely to task. "Can you, who call yourselves men, run away from a place which every available man is needed to protect it; you ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

The usually quiet little town of Mafeking was in a state of commotion and ferment such as had never before been known. Every train from down country was freighted with troops, horses, mules, or military supplies and equipments. The various stores were besieged with customers anxious to provide themselves with outfits for the road up. Night was made hideous by the braying of transport mules and donkeys quartered around, varied by the noisy carousals of troopers. The startling news from Bulawayo and the not improbable prospect of its falling into the hands of the rebels, the ravages of the rinderpest and the consequent difficulties of transport, the scarcity of water along the road up, together with the wild and extravagant *canards* always circulating, furnished ample topics for conversation.

The daily routine of camp life under canvas at Mafeking

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was as follows: Reveille, 6 a.m.; riding school and fatigue, 6.30; breakfast, 7.30; general fatigue and recruits' drill, 8.30; lunch, 12.30 p.m.; recruits' drill, 2 p.m.; dress for guard, 4.30; guard mounting, 5; dinner, 6; first post, 9; last post, 9.30; lights out, 9.45.

The horses for the Force were obtained from the Free State and the Kimberley districts. They were for the most part veldt-fed animals, averaging between 14–2 and 15 hands high, and though a small stamp of animal they showed a fair amount of breeding. Few of them were ideal chargers, but taken all round they were what an auctioneer would term a "useful lot." It may be mentioned that the first horse was bought on April 10th, and the last was delivered at Mafeking on April 25th; so that 1,100 horses, capable each of carrying a man fully equipped, averaging between 14 and 16 stone in weight, were inspected, purchased, and delivered in the remarkably short space of fifteen days.

At morning parade, buck-jumping exhibitions were of daily occurrence, and spills were frequent. There was usually an audience to watch the fun. An animal fairly quiet under ordinary circumstances generally showed a disposition to "go to market" when its would-be rider, fully equipped with rifle, bandolier, haversack, water-bottle, and spurs, proceeded to mount. Very many of the horses had never been backed at all before, a fact which became patent enough when the attempt was made.

Notwithstanding the condition in which the horses started for a long march of 600 miles, it was found that they stood the work remarkably well, the casualties being only 88 out of the 1,100 during the journey between Mafeking and Bulawayo, although, at the commencement of the march, horse-sickness was very prevalent. When it

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is considered that at times on the road up the horses were unable to get any grain, and had to subsist entirely on the little grass they picked up during the day, and still were able to make a daily march of twenty miles, not much fault can be found with the stamp of animal procured. Captain Beresford (7th Hussars) was entrusted with the purchase of the horses, and his judgment was evidently sound. The average price paid per head was £18.

The saddles were not all of the same pattern, some of them being cheap inferior articles, bad both for horse and rider. By far the best sort were the old B.B.P. saddles; but as they were limited in number, those only who were first in the field, other than officers, were able to secure them. Each man, on being passed by the doctor and duly sworn to serve for such a period as might be required of him, was supplied with the following articles of equipment and kit :—

2 blankets.	1 pair blue serge putties.
1 waterproof sheet,	1 felt hat, with pugaree.
2 shirts.	1 nightcap.
1 pair boots (ammunition).	1 great-coat.
2 pair socks.	1 jersey.
Riding breeches.	Kit bag.
Tunic (brown corduroy).	Haversack with plates, etc.
M.-H. rifle and bandolier.	Mess tin, or patrol tin.
Water-bottle.	Wallets.
Spurs.	Straps, nosebag, etc.

The above, from memory, was the regulation list; but as many of the minor articles ran out, those who joined among the last had to be content with what they could get.

Owing to the wholesale mortality among the cattle through the rinderpest plague, mules had to be used for

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transport purposes in place of trek oxen. The latter would have been cheaper, far more serviceable, and, strange to say, faster; still, had not mules been procurable, the campaign would have been practically impossible. These animals were procured from the Free State and Cape Colony, at prices ranging from £15 to £20 per head. The transport train of the Force consisted of 50 wagons and 700 mules, 14 mules being "the span" allotted to each wagon. Two wagons accompanied each detachment of 50 men, and on the two wagons were carried 200 rounds of ammunition per man (the men themselves carrying 50 rounds in their bandoliers), 30 days' rations, kits, cooking utensils, hospital stores, tools for repairing wagons, harness, etc. With every third or fourth party was an additional wagon carrying reserve ammunition, entrenching tools, and supplementary stores. The teams were driven and led, or perhaps it would be more correct to say punched, by Cape Boys from down country.

The first troop or detachment left Mafeking on the 12th April, and the others started as follows :—

No. 2 Troop	14th April
„ 3 „	15th „
„ 4 „	16th „
„ 5 „	17th „
„ 7 „ and 2 Maxims . .	19th „
Nos. 8 and 9 Troops	20th „
Signallers and Medical Detachment .	21st „
No. 10 Troop and Scouts with 50 horses	23rd „
Maxim Detachment	24th „
No. 11 Troop and Dismounted Detachment	25th „

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No. 12	Troop	29th April
„ 13	„	30th „
„ 14	„	1st May

The last three troops were composed mainly of men of the B.S.A. Co.'s Police, and these were despatched from Mafeking as soon as they arrived from England. Colonel Plumer left for Macloutsie on 26th April in order to make arrangements for the further progress of the Force onward from there, Major Watts being left in command at Mafeking. Each troop paraded in the early morning previous to taking the road, and was addressed by the O.C., who told the men that, before arriving in the enemy's country, there would be many days of marching, during which they would have opportunities of becoming familiar with their work. He cautioned the men to be as sparing as possible with the forage, as the supply was limited, and concluded with a few words of encouragement and advice. Then the troop officer gave the order, "Fours right. Walk. March," and himself leading, the troop, followed by the wagons, filed off across the plain with their faces towards the North and all their work before them. More often than not there were incidents connected with the departure of troops which detracted somewhat from the dignity of the occasion. Many of the horses being green and stupid, resisted all efforts on the part of their riders to range up in line alongside the others. But the troop sergeant-major, impatient of delay, was not to be trifled with. "Will you get into your places behind there!" "Don't sit there like a d——d fool!" "Fall in on the left of the line." "Are you going to keep us waiting here all day?" Such hints were not to be disregarded. In would go the spurs, down went the horses' heads, and then the fun would begin. Some of

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the animals could buck very handsomely, and in the case of a poor rider, a separation between horse and man was soon effected. The odds were certainly in favour of the horse. At the first buck there was a visible displacement of the rider in a forward direction. In the attempt to retain his balance, he would cling on by his spurs, a method by no means calculated to keep the partnership intact. Hampered by rifle, bandolier, water-bottle, and haversack, the unlucky trooper at the second or third buck would find himself ignobly landed on *terra firma*, not a little to the amusement of the onlookers.

NATIVE BLUNDERBUSS.

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CHAPTER II

On the Road

The First Trek—Types of Men—A Day's Routine—Messing and Rations—Looting—Arrival at Macloutsie—Kit Jumping—Constitution of Squadrons—In the Enemies' Country—Flanking Patrol—At Khami River—The General and the Escort—The Cape Boys.

FOR the first few days the horses were fresh and lively, little dreaming, poor brutes, of what lay in store for them. Arriving at Oaklands, the first halt was made at mid-day, when saddles were taken off and put into line, horses were driven off to graze under a guard of two men and a corporal, fires were lighted and the first meal on the veldt cooked. Then each man cast around to discover what kind of comrades he was likely to have for the road up.

The troop in which the writer found himself being the last, was chiefly composed of Jameson's men who had just arrived from their trip home. At first the details of the famous raid, told by those who had been in it were interesting topics, but by the time each individual version of "How we went into the Transvaal" had been told and re-told, the subject became somewhat threadbare. As a feeler, the suggestion would be made: "I suppose you had a pretty rough time with Jameson?" "We did, you know," would come the reply, and then the usual recital of the number of hours in the saddle without food and

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sleep, the narrow escapes, the life in Pretoria gaol, their treatment by the Boers, and so on.

Ramathlabama was reached after dark, when a bivouac was made for the night. Upon the horses being off-saddled, they were first led down to water, and then after being fastened to a picket-line stretched between two trees, their nose-bags were put on, and a horse guard, consisting of a corporal and three men—who had to take watches turn and turn about through the night—was left in charge of them. Rations were next served out by the issuer, and after a smoke and a yarn, each man rolled himself up in his blanket, and lying on his waterproof sheet with his kit bag for a pillow, lost no time in getting to sleep. The weather was cold, and the comfort of a stocking nightcap under these circumstances had to be experienced to be fully appreciated.

Some time about four o'clock next morning, while yet dark, the voice of the orderly corporal was heard in accents neither sweet nor low, "Now then, show a leg there," his duty being to rouse the men from their slumbers. Shortly after, round came the sergeants to hurry the slow, clumsy, and lazy in the rolling up of their kits, which were at once loaded on to the kit wagon. Then "up-saddle" and off. On looking back at the close of the Campaign, the opinion of most of us was that undoubtedly the hardest times experienced were during the journey up. It was practically a forced march, the orders being to push on as quickly as possible. This did not so much mean travelling quickly, as long hours spent in the saddle at the walk march, owing to the slow progress of the transport wagons, which were a constant source of delay. A wheel would come off, or they would get into difficulties crossing drifts or get stuck fast in a mud-hole—something

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was always going wrong. The tedious monotony of travelling along a seemingly interminable road, through an unpicturesque country—mostly sandy flats dotted with clumps of thorn bush—day in, day out, made every man long to get to the end, when even if a rougher time were experienced, there would at least be the excitement of encounters with the enemy, and life would be less monotonous and unprofitable.

The following may be taken as a sample of the routine for the twenty-four hours:—Reveille at 3 a.m., 3.30 a.m., or 4 a.m., according to the distance to be trekked to the next water; saddle up half an hour later. Trek till nine or ten o'clock, sometimes till noon without food, dismounting every hour or so to rest the horses. On arriving at the outspan, stables for half an hour, then rations issued and breakfast cooked. After this, if no saddle, kit, or arms inspection, rest until half-past three or four, snatching a sleep if flies and heat permitted. Then horses in, pack up kits, load wagons, saddle up and march until late into the night, when, on off-saddling, the second meal would be cooked. From this it will be seen that no over indulgence in food or sleep was allowed. In addition to the above, each man had about every fifth day to do his turn of duty on guard—horse guard at night and grazing guard during the day. For the former, a corporal and three men were detailed for duty laid down in the following terms: "To keep a watch over all horses and Government property in sight; to make fast any horses breaking loose from the line; to challenge any one approaching; and to prevent any horses from being taken from the line without first acquainting a non.-com. or the officer in charge." The night was divided up into watches of two hours on duty and four hours off, the guard being required to sleep along-

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side the horse line. Those on duty at night did grazing guard the following day, which consisted in keeping watch over the horses whilst grazing and preventing them from straying away. Thus, if a long trek followed on a man's turn for duty, he got little chance of uninterrupted rest for the space of nearly twenty-four hours, and meanwhile had to get his food as best he might under the circumstances.

For purposes of feeding, the troop was divided up into messes of not less than four, or more than eight, in each. It was curious to remark how, true to the law of like to like, the different elements sorted themselves into batches according to their several tastes and dispositions. Each member of a mess took his turn at cooking, the others providing the necessary fuel and water. The day's ration for each man was: 1¼ lbs. flour or meal, 1 lb. bully beef, 3 ozs. sugar, 1 oz. tea, 2 ozs. coffee, with occasionally ¼ lb. rice, and small quantities of salt, pepper, and baking powder. On passing roadside stores, this dietary scale was supplemented by jams, pickles, curry powder, or whatever else was obtainable, and the mess felt disposed to invest in; but the prices of goods increasing as the column moved further away from civilisation, were too prohibitive to admit of many luxuries.

"Cookies" (small cakes baked on the coals) were made according to the taste and skill of the *chef* for the day. Some were a success, others far from it. One man in particular used to turn out a bullet-proof article calculated to tax the digestive organs of an ostrich, but then as he remarked, "they stood by a fellow" for a long time. After eating two or three, this fact became very evident. Thanks, however, to the nipping cold atmosphere night and morning, one's powers of assimilation were equal to almost anything,—and this was indeed fortunate.

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Some members of the M.R F.

Face p. 70.

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The next place on the road was the now historical Pitsani Pothluga. Near by, to the right of the road, was the site of the camp where Dr. Jameson organised his forces. Resting one day at Sand Pits, we proceeded on the following to Aasvogel's Kop, one of the few pretty spots to be met with during this journey. Well-timbered kopjes slope gently down on either side towards the road, forming a tempting site for a residence and a welcome relief to the flat monotony of the surrounding veldt. After a few hours' halt, we took the road again and the troop arrived at Ramoutsa that evening. This is a big Kaffir location or village, consisting of a lot of fenced-in kraals. The natives remained inside, evincing no interest in the arrival of the troop, as they had seen so many pass by that way already.

Before noon on the fifth day Crocodile Pool was reached. Here the remainder of the day was spent in bathing, washing clothes, and resting. This place, with deep running water, plenty of shade, and grass in abundance, was a perfect oasis in the desert, and was regretfully exchanged for the hot dusty line of march. All the way the road was inches deep in dust, and this disturbed by the hoofs of sixty horses kept every one enveloped in a continual cloud. When trotting, it was quite impossible to distinguish any trace of the man immediately in front of one. Added to this was the horrible stench arising from the decaying carcases of dead oxen—victims of the rinderpest—which lined the road-side. So accustomed did the horses become to the sight of them, that after a while they forgot to even prick up their ears. It was a common occurrence to see the remains of whole spans, twenty or thirty, lying about within a radius of 100 yards. Oftentimes camp was pitched right alongside places where these poor brutes had

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dropped dead, and the all-pervading effluvia arising from their remains in every stage of decomposition, offended the nostrils throughout the night. The air never was entirely free from this pestilential taint, and to a certain extent the troops became inured to it.

Now and again wagons were met with—derelicts of the veldt—laden with timber, furniture, and cases of all kinds of merchandise, drawn up in the bush just off the road, and left to look after themselves. All the trek oxen had succumbed to the plague, and the transport riders had had no alternative left them but to abandon their loads. And here it will not be out of place to touch upon a subject that has been the cause of much bad blood between the members of the M.R.F. and the tradespeople of Bulawayo: the wholesale looting of these wagons. Stranded as they were with their cargoes, entirely deserted, with not so much as a native in charge, is it to be wondered at that a motley crowd of men, many of whom were not in the habit of drawing fine distinctions between *meum* and *tuum*, should take advantage of the opportunity thus offered, and help themselves to what came in their way?

It has been stated, and probably with some truth, that Dutch transport riders came over the Transvaal border—for the northern road through the British Protectorate runs parallel with, and only a few miles from the border, for a considerable distance—and did the lion's share of the looting. However that may be, there is no gainsaying the fact that several troops freely plundered whatever they found on or near the wagons, breaking open cases of liquor, provisions, clothing, etc., and wantonly destroying or exposing to the weather what they were not in a position to make use of. American clocks were set up as targets.

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Hats, ties, and other articles of clothing were hung about on trees. All kinds of liquor were broached and consumed on the premises. Champagne and liqueurs were drained out of tin mugs, while whisky, brandy, and other spirits were tossed down by the bottle. What were the officers about, it may be inquired, to allow this state of affairs to last? The only answer is that they were either ignorant of it or consenting parties. One officer only became alive to what was taking place when he found about half his men drunk and incapable. He ordered the remaining bottles that had been unpacked to be broken to pieces on the spot. The suggestion made on one occasion to some who were breaking open a case with a pick-head that it was "hardly playing the game" met with the response, "Well, if we don't, somebody else will, and we may just as well have the benefit as the next that come along."

This being a fair example of the morality prevailing on the question of the rights of property, it is hardly a matter for surprise that men, whose diet was confined to meal and bully beef, should lay hands on whatever came in their way, regardless of mythical owners.

This vandalism and wholesale looting is much to be regretted however; for, notwithstanding the fact that where proofs were forthcoming the Chartered Company paid compensation for what had been consumed and destroyed, the M.R.F. earned for itself a bad name, which many among them did not deserve. As a result of inquiries made on the subject, a certain percentage was deducted from the pay of those who were known to have had a hand in the looting. The merchants and tradespeople of Bulawayo, when they became acquainted with the fate of the goods consigned to them were naturally indignant, and were wont to remark that it was a "nice thing that the very

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men who are sent up to our assistance should relieve us in this fashion."

From Crocodile Pools to Gaberones is a short trek, and on our arrival there the first hundred miles of the journey was completed. Gaberones, an old station of the B.B.P., is a place of some little importance in these parts, and boasts of three or four stores, two hotels, a post office, police barracks, and a few respectable residences. Thence we pushed on to Mochudi, a place rather prettily situated amongst some hills. It has a large native population, under the well-known chief Linchwe. The Kaffir kraals are built on the high ground, and with their dome-shaped huts, roofed in with dried grass, look most picturesque. They are kept spotlessly clean by the women, who work in the fields, carry the wood and water, cook, and in fact do everything, while their lords and masters just stand around and superintend. The class of white women who spend so much time in attempting to usurp men's sphere might study with advantage this phase of the question, as presented by the Mochudi natives. Here there is a mission station and a well-built Dutch church. Drinks and provisions were perceptibly dearer in price, four shillings being demanded for a small bottle of beer. But this was nothing to what we were to experience later on.

During the third night from Mochudi it rained heavily, never ceasing from the time the horses were off-saddled until daybreak the following morning. There was no shelter, so every one just lay down as he was; and as it was practically impossible to keep a pipe alight, much less cook anything, a miserable night was passed, and the troop was glad enough when the time came to get on the road, blankets, clothes—in fact everything—being soaked through. After a march of three days Palla was reached

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on May 12th. Here the officer, Lieutenant Cazalet, received word from the Colonel to lose no time in reaching Macloutsie. So the pace was made as fast as the tired and poorly fed animals could shuffle along. Next day the troop reached Sassi's Post, and camp was pitched about a mile from water, for fear any of the men should cross the river into the Transvaal, and so arouse the suspicions of the Boers.

On May 16th our fires were lighted on the banks of the Limpopo or Crocodile River—a fine, wide stream with some pretension to the title of river. A refreshing sight it was to see clear running water again. On the opposite bank a number of small monkeys or marmosets were clambering about the trees. The view both up and down the river is very beautiful. Being now well into the winter the air before sunrise was bitterly cold. A start was usually made two or three hours before dawn. The order was given, the men jumped, or rather hoisted themselves, into their saddles, and the dreary march was continued in glum silence, unbroken save by the tramp of the horses or the jingling of a curb-chain. Sleepy eyes were turned to the portion of the horizon where the all too tardy sun was expected to appear. A grunt from some member of the troop would call attention to the morning star, that welcome precursor of the sun. Many had never risen early enough before to make its acquaintance. But the long comfortless marches, in the cold, dark mornings, converted the stranger into a much-looked-for and appreciated friend.

At some of the outspans or halting-places, water was only to be obtained by scooping it out of holes dug in the sand of the river bed. At a depth of two feet or so, it welled up from below and was of very fair quality,—

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certainly safer to drink than that of the stagnant pools, the dark water of which might conceal the dead body of a rinderpest-stricken ox.

On May 18th a halt was made at Silika Kop. The distance to water from where the men were camped was nearly two miles down a deep gorge, the sides of which were covered with a dense growth of semi-tropical foliage. There are a number of what are commonly known as the cream-of-tartar trees on this spot. This tree bears an oval-shaped fruit with a hard shell. On breaking it open, the inside is found to contain a number of seeds encased in fibre and a whitish powder. This latter has a sharp acid taste, and is useful in relieving thirst; in conjunction with bicarbonate of soda it furnishes an excellent substitute for baking powder, and was used for this purpose by those who were acquainted with its value.

Macloutsie—the headquarters of the old B.B.P.—was reached on May 22nd. On arriving, it was a great disappointment to find that, with the exception of Nos. 12 and 13 Troops, the remainder of the Column under Colonel Plumer had left for Khami a week or so before, and probably by that time were in the thick of the fighting. The township of Macloutsie is situated on the Macloutsie River, and consists of post office, police barracks, huts, stores, and a fort. The last-named had a bogus Maxim made out of iron-piping, mounted on the top of the magazine. It was a very colourable imitation of the genuine article, and no doubt would have served the purpose of keeping any hostile natives at a respectable distance. The ruse reminded one of those artificial cats, made of tin, of which gardeners at home make use to scare the sparrows from their seed beds.

Here it was found that for the future such articles as

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soap, candles, matches, etc., must be regarded as luxuries; whilst whisky at 25*s.* a bottle and lime juice at 10*s.* were altogether out of the question. Books of coupons were served out on Julius Weil's Stores, the face value of which were 6*d.*, 9*d.*, 1*s.*, and 2*s.* The few additions to the regulation diet of bully and cookies became a heavy charge, and made quite an inroad into the daily wage of 7*s.* 6*d.* By this time it became apparent that some of the members of the Column were not all they might be in the matter of honesty. Thefts of private property, articles of kit, accoutrements, and even food, were of almost daily occurrence. Nothing, from a strap to a blanket, could be left lying about with safety. Should the owner be suddenly called away on duty, no sooner was his back turned than as likely as not his belongings were stolen. Complaints were made to the officer on several occasions, but unless the culprit was caught *flagrante delicto*, it was almost impossible, unless it had a distinctive mark by which it could be identified, to recover any article so lost. Water bottles, haversacks, blankets, gun buckets and rifles were mostly of the same "sealed pattern," and the recovery of any of these was consequently rendered all the more difficult. In a well-disciplined Police Corps, where every man has his entire equipment marked with his particular number, it would be a risky matter for any one person to "jump" the property of another, nor would it be necessary, as he could by applying, get a lost or damaged article replaced, but in our case it was different; many when they joined, were not supplied with their full complement of requisites, nor were they likely to be, in a legitimate manner. Accordingly they made good the deficiency by annexing the property of other men, these in their turn doing likewise, and so it came about that those having

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any scruples in the matter found themselves gradually dispossessed of all their belongings.

At Macloutsie the force was reorganised into squadrons, each squadron consisting of three troops, and this organisation was retained throughout the Campaign, the corps being constituted as follows :—

A Squadron, Troops 1, 2, and 3. Officers: Captain Bowden; Lieutenants Wood, Cashel, and McQueen.

B Squadron, Troops 4, 5, and 6. Officers: Captains Straker and Satchwell; Lieutenants Constable, May, Fordham, Masterson, and Williams.

C Squadron, Troops 7, 8, and 9. Officers: Major Kershaw; Captains Fowler and Murray; Lieutenants McNichol, Forbes, Rawstorne, and Mathias.

D Squadron, Troops 10 and 11. Officers: Captain Fraser; Lieutenants Tomlinson, Lees, McGeean, and Heyman.

E Squadron, Troops 12, 13, and 14. Officers: Captain Drury; Lieutenants Cazalet, Murray, and Abbott.

Maxim Detachment. Officers: Captain Wheeler; Lieutenants Pyke and Michell.

Signalling Detachment. Officer: Captain Dent.

Medical Detachment. Officers: Surgeon-Captains Michell and Lunan.

The three last troops forming E Squadron, with Captain Drury in command, left Macloutsie for Khami on May 24th (Queen's Birthday), the very day on which the advance troops of the M.R.F. had their first brush with the Matabele at the Umgusa River. At noon on the day following, the halting-place was on the right bank of the Shashi River. This river, or rather river-bed—for with the exception of a few small pools here and there it was practically dry—is of great width, and forms the southern

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boundary of Matabeleland. When running bank-high after the rains it is a very imposing stream; but when we were on the road, it was but one wide stretch of sand and rocks. The country through which it takes its course abounds in lions. Close to the camp their spoor could be plainly seen in the wet sand.

Before starting the next day, Captain Drury briefly addressed the squadron. Over the river, he said, commenced the enemy's country. The squadron would in future march with advance and rear guards, and a flanking patrol on either side of the wagons. Laager would be formed each night, and he might remind them that any one found asleep whilst on guard, was liable to be court-martialled and shot.

We soon discovered what flanking patrol through dense bush and over rocky ground meant. Suffice it to say that it by no means increased the comfort of travelling, nor was the additional work good for the already jaded animals. Semokwe River was the next to be crossed, and at noon on May 30th we came in sight of Mangwe Fort. Here we learned that a day or two previous to the arrival of the squadron, a detachment from the fort had made a sortie and killed or captured eighteen of the Matabele rebels. The prisoners on being brought in had been promptly shot.

The following morning laager was struck at daybreak, and the journey through the rugged scenery of the Mangwe Pass began.

From Mangwe to Figtree the country is as pretty as any to be found in Matabeleland, and it appeared all the more so to us by contrast with the flat, uninteresting march through the British Protectorate. It does not take long to gain an idea as to the formidable nature of the

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Pass if held by an enemy. Huge granite boulders tumbled together, or as geologists would say, "lying unconformably one on the other," flank the narrow road on either side, backed up by the steep walls of granite rock from which they have become detached. In many places there is but just sufficient room for wagons to pass through. Proceeding, the kopjes become isolated, with more and more space between them as we emerge into the open country beyond. Here to the left a bold range of hills stretches away for miles, whilst in the foreground lies a wide network of valleys, dotted about with queer-shaped kopjes, the rocks of which, piled up one upon another, assume the most fantastic shapes. These bold rocks of coarse grey granite, only relieved occasionally by the smooth stems and deep green foliage of the mountain fig and others of the same family, stand out very prominently, and lend a peculiar charm to the scenery of the district. Passing by Forts Selous, Figtree, and Halsted, the squadron arrived in due course at Fort Khami, the place fixed upon for the mobilisation of the troops. The neighbourhood of Khami is anything but attractive. For miles around, except along the water-course, there is scarcely a bush or tree to be seen; nothing meets the eye but a wide expanse of undulating veldt covered with stones and dry grass. The river Khami heading from the South-East, although but a small stream here, provides a never-failing current of pure water, of which the weary men gladly availed themselves to wash off the grime and dust of the march. Fuel, however, was very scarce, and it was some time before sufficient dried dung, odds and ends of packing-cases, and thorn-bush from the scherms, could be collected with which to cook a meal.

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It was here that an incident occurred, which serves to illustrate the discomforts to which the soldier is at all times liable. The narrative may be told in the words of a member of the troop.

"Scarcely had we halted, and were about to satisfy the cravings of a healthy appetite, when to our dismay the order was given for our troop to saddle up at once, and be ready to start in ten minutes. Word had just arrived that Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington and staff were due to arrive at Figtree that afternoon, and we had been detailed to return down the road to that place in order to provide an escort for the distinguished arrivals. Our horses were leg-weary, we had been looking forward to a brief spell of rest, and the whole business was voted rough luck. Nevertheless, under protest or not, we were in the saddle and off at a canter on the back track within the time stated. Every now and then 'old Pa'—the affectionate name bestowed on the troop-officer by his men—gave the word to dismount and lead the horses to give them a chance to recover their wind, then up and away again as fast as they could leg it, and so on alternately until we were within about three miles of Figtree.

"Here the sound of a horn round a bend in the road told of the approach of the General, and in a few minutes we were drawn up in front form to one side of the road to receive him with the respect due to the Commander of all the forces in Rhodesia. As the coach pulled up, out jumped the well-known figure of the General himself. He at once advanced to the officer with an inquiry as to the reason of our presence there, and on learning that we were there as an escort to himself he seemed rather tickled. 'The men,' he re-

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marked, 'had better dismount and give their horses a rest'; and a few minutes later, as he was about to resume his seat in the coach, he intimated that he did not require an escort. 'But,' he continued, with a twinkle in his eye, 'if I should want you, I will either whistle or fire a shot!' With this, the coach and its occupants moved off, leaving us to reflect on the absurdity of the farce and follow on in its wake to Khami. It was now too late in the day to attempt to cover the ground we had just traversed, so a halt for the night was made near Fort Halsted, where, not over-burdened with food or bedding, we slept the sleep of the weary, arriving at Khami early the following morning.

"From Khami with the rest of the squadron, we travelled across the veldt to Hope Fountain, a distance of fifteen miles, making it just after dark. Here we found the whole Column encamped on a steep spur overlooking a valley, and at first sight it seemed incredible that so many horses and men could be quartered on such a comparatively small area. The sides of the hill were ablaze with camp-fires, and as we picked our way amongst them, it became evident that scarcely a foot of ground was unoccupied."

On being told off to their lines, and when saddles had been ranged, the men started off to exploit their surroundings and to look up old friends who had preceded them in the march up. Many and mutual were the surprises that night. Men seen last "down Colony" engaged in the peaceful pursuits of a business life, cropped up on all sides in the uniform of the M.R.F. After the preliminary greeting, "Hulloa! What on earth brings you up here?" and the readily accepted invitation to join the mess, they proceeded to give a graphic account of

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The Cemetery at Hope Fountain.

Face p. 82.

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the fight on the Umgusa, from which they had just returned, and to indulge in wild speculation as to the prospects immediately before them.

Here one recognised in a sergeant on the Maxims, an old friend whom he had last seen across the tennis-net down in Kimberley,—destined, poor fellow, before the close of the Campaign to have his skull carried away by a Matabele "potleg." Among the troopers, former acquaintances in the new guise of bloodthirsty warriors seemed to hail one at every turn. Those who had had a fling at the rebels were anxious to repeat the performance as soon as possible, while the remainder, who had just missed the engagement by a few days, were equally desirous of taking part in active operations. But before proceeding further with the details of the Campaign, it will be as well to refer to the Cape Boys' Corps, which later on was to take so prominent a part in the encounters between Plumer's Column and the rebels, at Thabas Amamba and amongst the Matoppo Hills.

Major Robertson who organised and commanded this Corps, kindly contributed the following account of their enrolment and of their march up country :—

When Earl Grey was at Mafeking he conceived the idea of raising a corps of Basutos from British Bechuanaland, and had almost decided to accept an offer to recruit 1,000 natives from that district. Before doing so, however, it was suggested to him that the Cape "Boys" in Johannesburg were anxious to enrol for service in the North, and he accordingly asked for 200 of them, as an experiment.

These "Boys" arrived on the 24th and 27th of April at Mafeking, under the command of Major Robertson, having Captains Nash and Ross as company officers. They were concentrated at Oaklands ten miles north

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of Mafeking, and on the 29th April started on their march to the front. Their equipment as infantry, simply consisted of the Martini-Henry rifle and bayonet. Having no bayonet sheaths, they marched with fixed bayonets throughout this long, weary journey of nearly 600 miles.

Many soon became foot-sore, and in consequence suffered greatly; but they still moved forward without a murmur, anxious only to reach Bulawayo in time. The rinderpest and drought, combined with the fact that sickness amongst the horses and mules was carrying these off in great numbers, necessitated the use of donkeys for the transport of the five wagons conveying the food supply for the corps. The poor creatures had to pick up their food along the route as best they could.

Those who have had to content themselves with a donkey transport service will readily understand what sort of task lay before the Cape Boys' Corps; but for the uninitiated, it may be as well to state that in a long march of 500 or 600 miles, the donkey will with good roads average 1½ miles per hour whilst actually on the move. They should not be kept in harness for more than four hours at a stretch, and must be allowed an interval between each stretch of work of at least two hours during which to graze when corn is not obtainable. Should they be worked during the mid-day hours, they are liable to collapse completely, and the transport consequently to be stranded. A very slight mathematical knowledge is needed to figure out how this Corps worked its passage northwards, and under what trying circumstances the men had to toil on, hour after hour, day and night, frequently having almost to carry the poor half-starved, half-grown animals, many of which, as time went on, showed signs of being in foal.

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To use Major Robertson's own words :—

"There was plenty of time for reflection as we slowly wended our way in and out through thick bush, watching the painful progress of the jaded animals as they dragged onwards mile after mile. In addition to the slowness of the pace—slower than a funeral procession—was the pestilential atmosphere caused by the dead oxen strewed over the face of the country we crossed. At many places the water was polluted, and it was necessary to dig in the beds of dried-up rivers to get what was required.

"The mounted troops could march rapidly in comparison, for the reason that grain for their horses had been sent on in advance. No such arrangement, however, had been made for us. One notable illustration of this occurred at Aasvogel Kop, seventy miles north of Mafeking, when a certain Imperial major informed me that a bag of grain I was endeavouring to obtain for the miserable donkeys, was intended for the use of Imperial troops, and that it was of the smallest consequence whether the Cape Boys and I with our donkeys got hopelessly stranded or not. To this I replied that the Administrator, Earl Grey, held a diametrically opposite opinion on the subject, and that the said major's remarks would be duly communicated in the proper quarter; whereupon this would-be military autocrat proceeded to 'climb down.'

"By the time Palla was reached, twenty-five donkeys had succumbed to the hardships of the road; and when we reached Bulawayo, of the ninety animals with which we started, only forty remained. The wagons, however, drawn by the poor surviving cripples, arrived there in the early part of June, having taken fourteen days to cover the last sixty miles of the journey.

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"When the Corps arrived at Mangwe, a small detachment under Sergeant-Major Haigh was left to bring the wagons on; and the men, carrying four days' rations apiece, marched into the Mangwe Pass at 7 p.m. on the 6th June, arriving in Bulawayo on the morning of the 8th, having covered the 600 miles in thirty marching days.

"During the march care had been taken to give the men as much instruction as possible in the use of arms, by means of target practice and drill, and two days later, they were complimented by Major-General Carrington on their smart, soldierly appearance.

"Obedient to an order given by the Administrator, I was careful to prohibit any firing on the march up, except when necessary for instruction, and the strict observance of this led to an amusing incident.

"The Corps, marching in column of fours with fixed bayonets had passed the Lotsani River, and the first column was almost out of sight by the time that I had seen the last wagon across the drift. I then galloped up to the front, and, to my astonishment, found the column halted without any order to that effect having been given. Riding up to Captain Nash, I inquired what was the meaning of the halt, to which he replied, 'Well, you see, we are not allowed to fire, and just now, about twenty-five yards in front of us, two lions came out and stood facing us on the road, so we simply halted and looked at them, and they apparently satisfied, then trotted off into the bush.' I saw the spoor on the road, but nothing of the lions, and for the moment half regretted the order about the firing."

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List of Halting-Places on the Road taken by the Matabeleland Relief Force from Mafeking to Bulawayo.

	Miles Intermediate.
Mafeking	—
Ramathlabama	16
Pitsani	10
Sand Pits	19
Boulder Pits	10
Aasvogel Kop	15
Ramoutsa	15
Gaberones	18
Mitse Maklaba	18
Mochudi	10
Notwani Bend	9
Kalakani River	9
Suswan River	18
Ankopboyle	12
Lakalos	12
Masana	12
Palla	12
Sassi's Post	14
Wegdrai	12
Makalapsi River	13
1st Wegdrai, Crocodile Bend	13
2nd " " "	36
Salika Kop	18
Lotsani River	30
Sake River	18
Maequche	10
Pakwi Outspan	11
Maripong River	9
Signal Hill (Macloutsie)	20
Shashi Drift	15
Lions' Spoor Camp	33
Happy Valley	10
Junction Mangwe and Semokwe	19
Mangwe	20
Matole Hotel	18
Khami	18
Bulawayo	9
Total	587 miles.

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CHAPTER III

Active Service

Commencement of Active Operations—A Night March from Bulawayo—The Umguza Engagements—Return to Hope Fountain—The Gwai Patrol—Return to Khami—The Scouts—Lieutenant Cashel and Sergeant-Major Blatherwick's Adventures—Too Much Display—The Enemy Warned—Moving to Effect Junction with Macfarlane—Pyke and Elliott Missing—They Return—No Signs of Macfarlane's Patrol—Rations Giving Out—No Tobacco—Makeshifts—The "Whispering Patrol"—An Injudicious Bugle Call—The Capture of a Kraal—Routine of Duties on Line of March—Cossack Post—Amusing Incidents—Hardships of Patrol Life—Discontent—General Carrington—A Night Adventure—The "Knave of Clubs."

Initial Operations of M.R.F.—Engagements on the Umguza.

THE beleaguered inhabitants of Bulawayo, for so they practically were, had with the keenest expectation been awaiting the arrival of Colonel Plumer's relief force. Being a properly mobilised regiment, this would be able to pursue the rebels and fight them on their own ground, amongst the rocky fastnesses of the Matoppos. At the time the M.R.F. arrived at Khami, the Matabele were still in far too dangerous proximity to the town to allow of any feeling of security. Some of them, more audacious than others, would occasionally appear on the summits of ridges not three miles distant, and would form capital targets for seven-pounder practice till, once the range

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found, the merry shrapnel would make them suddenly bear in mind the urgency of an appointment a few miles further from Bulawayo. The necessity of driving the enemy from the vicinity of Bulawayo, as a preliminary move, was immediately obvious to Colonel Plumer.

On the 20th May therefore, the mounted troops of the M.R.F., with the exception of D and E Squadrons, were all concentrated round Khami River Fort. On the morning of the 24th (the Queen's Birthday) the Column moved into Bulawayo, accompanied by Radicladi's Bamangwato, a motley crew of natives, in every conceivable style of dress and undress, but for the most part armed with rifles. From the earliest hours of morning the Bulawayans had been straining eager eyes along the road to convince themselves of the actual presence of the longed-for relief force.

At last the Bamangwato were seen winding their way down the shallow valley which separates the town from the police camp. Troop after troop of mounted men followed them and were vociferously welcomed by the numbers of people who by this time had streamed over to the encampment. Saddles were lined up, rations were issued, and the members of Plumer's Force were at liberty to fraternise with the men to whose relief they had come so far. Friends long parted met once more and "fought their battles o'er again," long-forgotten acquaintances turning up dressed in the dingy brown corduroy, showed equal surprise on suddenly distinguishing an old-time comrade in one of the variegated military gets-up of the Bulawayo Field Force. One and all, "Plumer's men" were eager to be told every detail of the fighting which had taken place before their advent.

Gossip was soon to be put an end to, however, for on the arrival of Colonel Plumer and his staff at the camp, that

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officer made known his intention to march at midnight, in order to effect a junction with Major Watts and B Squadron at a given point to the north-west of Government House, and there fall on the enemy in their scherms at dawn.

The greatest activity now prevailed, for it was announced that the Force was to be out for three days, and that without returning to Bulawayo it would follow the Kami River back to the Fort. Kits were overhauled, haversacks stocked, and *impedimenta* generally reduced as much as possible, for no wagons were to proceed with the expedition. By nightfall every one was in a state of suppressed excitement. The weather was magnificent, but the biting cold soon made itself felt, whilst the full May moon shed an eerie light over the bustling men and patient horses. Orderlies hastened to and fro. Civilians, attached by special permission, kept riding up and down the lines seeking some particular squadron. Press correspondents were pestering every one for information and getting roundly sworn at in consequence, and generally every one appeared to be endeavouring to do half a dozen things at once. Presently came the order to saddle up, then the order to mount; strict silence was enjoined, and quietly the long line of men and horses filed out of camp, towards Government House.

As above stated, the plan was to effect a junction with another force under Major Watts, which had gone forward earlier in the day, as the rebels were reported to be massed on the Umgusa, and in considerable force. At about 3 o'clock a.m. on the 25th, heavy firing could be heard away to the right, and the Column was immediately turned in the direction of the sound. It shortly afterwards came up with Major Watts, who had found the

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enemy in great numbers occuping a strong position behind bush scherms in the direction of his advance. On his approach, the enemy had opened a heavy fire, to which he had promptly replied by bringing his Maxims into action, and after an hour's fighting he had succeeded in driving the enemy from the position. It was just then that Colonel Plumer's Column came up, and the enemy beating a hasty retreat, it was decided to await the dawn before advancing further. In this engagement Mr. Rice Hamilton was wounded in both legs, one Cape Boy was killed, and three horses were shot. A general advance was made as soon as the sun rose, with the Scouts ahead and A, B, and C Squadrons in *echelon* from the right. The Maxims on naval carriages followed in rear of the leading squadron, with the Native Contingent on the right flank. The country passed over was very rugged, and a dense growth of thorn-bush shut out the view to the front and the flanks. After marching a distance of half a mile or so, heavy firing opened all along our front, and the order was immediately given to extend from the centre of squadrons in skirmishing order. On dismounting, these were quickly engaged in a heavy fire to the front and right flank. The enemy retired firing, but losing heavily, their retreating line being swept with the fire from the Maxims and rifles. The horses were then brought up, and the whole mounted force advancing at a gallop drove them into the open. The rout of the enemy was complete, and as they dispersed in all directions the troopers gave chase and shot them down as they ran. A halt was then sounded for much-needed rest and refreshment. During the fight Troopers Peacock and Slowey were very severely wounded, the latter having his leg amputated on the field. These men were sent back to Bulawayo soon afterwards on stretchers, as there was no

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ambulance wagon with the Force. The party was accompanied by a small mounted escort. Shortly after their departure, an orderly came back in hot haste to say that there were large numbers of the enemy between them and the town. When he learned this news, Colonel Plumer despatched No. 8 Troop at a gallop, under Lieutenant McNicholl, to strengthen the party with the wounded. On approaching the town they were met by an ambulance wagon and thirty mounted men, together with Earl Grey, Captain Colenbrander, and other well-known townspeople. The same afternoon the force marched about nine miles to the Khami River, and about 5 p.m. became engaged with another Matabele impi. Fighting was kept up until sunset, when the enemy broke and fled; pursuit, however, was rendered impossible owing to darkness.

The force bivouacked on the battlefield, and on the 26th, failing, after extended reconnaissances, to discover any of the enemy, marched back to Khami Fort.

On the 29th May the whole Corps, with the exception of B Squadron, which had returned to Government House, Bulawayo, moved to Hope Fountain, and remained there until the 4th June.

The Gwai Patrol.

From Hope Fountain the Column, now augmented by D and E Squadrons, marched back to Khami. On arrival there, it was stated in general orders that on the following morning the Column would start on a twenty days' patrol down the Gwai River. The articles of kit to be taken by each man were reduced to a minimum. It was freely stated and believed, that we should be well amongst the

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rebels within three or four days from the time of starting, and as the Gwai District was known to be thickly populated, there appeared to be every probability of some heavy fighting during the progress of the patrol.

We moved from Khami at 8 a.m. on June 5th, the Column being 450 strong, with three Maxims and sixteen wagons for transport.

Immediately after crossing the Khami Drift we struck across the veldt in a westerly direction; in places the bush was very thick, and the friendly natives had frequently to be sent on ahead to cut a track for the wagons. News was received from natives that a number of rebels were collected in some villages eighteen miles N.N.W. Messrs. Thomas and Payne, Native Commissioners, acted as guides to the Column, and were in charge of the friendlies.

On June 7th we marched on Mayesa's Kraal, but found it deserted; forty head of cattle, however, were captured, which ensured a supply of fresh meat for some time to come. Next day laager was formed at noon, and two troops under Captain Bowden were sent off at a gallop to surprise some kraals near by, where it was confidently expected that some of the enemy would be encountered. But again they were not at home, and after setting fire to the huts, we returned to the main body.

Meantime the Scouts, under Captain Coope and Lieutenant Taylor, had been sent out to discover the whereabouts of a large impi suspected of being in the neighbourhood, as from reports received, and signs of fresh spoor in every direction, it was evident the rebels were lurking about in force at no great distance from the Column. Soon after leaving, the Scouts came up with a woman who agreed to lead them to where the impi was. Five natives, probably the outposts of the rebel force, were seen dodging amongst

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A NATIVE KRAAL.

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the bushes; these were pursued and shot. The party advanced at the trot for about eight miles, following up the spoor through very thick bush in the direction of the Khami River, when, as it was getting dark, and there was some risk of losing the Column owing to the difficult nature of the country, the officer in charge decided to return. This, however, with failing light, was not so easy, and the exact whereabouts of the main body being a matter of uncertainty, a halt was made for the night. After dark signal rockets were seen, showing the direction of the laager.

It was a general order that, in case of attack, the men were to hold the kopje near to which they were bivouacked, should there be an alarm and no time to saddle up. Contrary to expectation, the night passed without incident, and the Scouts rejoined the Column at 6 a.m. the following morning, their prolonged absence having caused some anxiety.

Apropos of this adventure, it was learned from rebels who were later on taken prisoners, that an impi of several thousands was within four miles of the spot where the Scouts had spent the night, and it was by the merest chance that the party was not cut up. The young men, said a Matabele captive, were anxious to attack the party that night, and had with difficulty been restrained by the older and more cautious, who believed that so small a body had only been sent out as a trap.

This impi, not desiring to make closer acquaintance with so strong a force as ours, must have given us the slip, and leaving the low-country, must have made for the Matoppo Hills, as they were neither seen nor heard of again during the patrol.

On the 8th June a troop from A Squadron, under

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Lieutenant Cashel, succeeded in surprising a small party of the enemy. The encounter, presenting several points of interest, is given in that officer's own words :—

"On the day in question I was ordered to patrol near the Khami River, supposed to be about 15 miles to the North of the Column. I went out about 10 miles and burned several kraals, coming across the spoor of some natives in the bush. As the country became very thick, I gave the order to return. When about half a mile on the way back, and as we were rounding the corner of a clump of bush, we came on a party of rebels in front of us. I saw five, but there were more in a kraal about 500 yards to the right of our advance. Sending a sergeant and half my party over to the kraal, with the remainder I pursued the rebels we had first seen, and who were now running away. On seeing us in pursuit they scattered. Drawing my revolver, I singled out one and followed him. On my approach he lay down his rifle, and I lowered my revolver as he did so ; no sooner, however, had he noticed this action on my part, than up came his rifle within a foot of my chest. I instantly fired, shooting him through the heart, and sent another bullet through his head to make sure. How it was he failed to shoot first is a mystery ; either his gun must have missed fire, or in the confusion of the moment, he must have failed to find the trigger. Anyhow, it was to be one or the other of us, and fortunately, to use an American expression, 'I got the bulge on him.' While this was going on, Sergeant-Major Blatherwick was being engaged single-handed with some of the enemy. Seeing this, I galloped up to him. Blatherwick, covering one of his opponents with his revolver, pulled the trigger, but the cartridge missed fire. The next moment his intended victim hurled his assegai at the sergeant-major, striking

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him in the lower part of the back as he rode past. The latter was quickly avenged however, for almost at the same moment I dropped the fellow with a shot at close quarters. Of the remainder, two were killed and the other was taken prisoner. The natives in the kraal made good their escape into the thick bush before my men could get amongst them."

It is unnecessary to enter into the details of the daily marches, often without incident save for the burning of kraals ; it will suffice to state that no large bodies of the enemy were met with : they had either retreated to the hills, or what is more probable had evaded the Column on its approach.

If the main object of the expedition was to engage the enemy, the means employed were certainly not calculated to bring this about ; that is to say, if generally accepted theories are to be taken as correct.

When the conditions of the march are considered, it will scarcely be wondered at that the enemy as a concentrated force were never taken unawares in the course of this patrol.

From "reveille" before daybreak, until "lights out" at 8.45 p.m., the bugles were sounding the calls all through the day, whilst hardly a night passed but rockets and star shells lit up the sky for miles around. There was no mystery about the approach of the Column. On arrival at the halting-place the fact was made as patent as possible. If the enemy had no desire to fight, there was not the slightest reason why he should. The line of march was marked by a continuous succession of blazing kraals, which, from day to day, the Column left in its wake ; whilst at night, when laager was formed, what with the trumpets, the pyrotechnic display of rockets and the burning of grass

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round the position, the presence of the Force was very completely advertised to the neighbourhood at large. Ample opportunity was thus given to the alert and nimble native to make himself scarce; and when we arrived on the scene, he invariably did so. The fact is that the thoughts of his pursuers were far too much occupied with such weighty matters as are entailed by strict military routine; such, for instance, as the nice alignment of saddles, parades for this and for that, and the many refinements presumably indispensable to the conduct of a force officered on Imperial lines. All this, too, in a country where previous experience should have taught that success depends almost entirely on secrecy, stealth, and despatch. What with the formidable appearance presented by the Column when its full strength could be estimated in open country, and the slow rate of speed at which it travelled, no enemy was likely to answer to the invitation to "Come out and be killed." One can picture the wily rebel listening from afar to the white man's "pow-wow," and whilst stirring his mess of "impupu" speculating as to how long it might be before a flank movement to the rear would be necessary on his part, to frustrate the candid intentions of the invader.

Now and again the flanking parties came across stragglers in the bush who were either ridden down and shot on sight, or were made prisoners and despatched by a firing party on the confines of the laager.

The ferocity exhibited on several occasions by the captors towards their victims, was anything but an edifying spectacle. A revolting instance occurred on the line of march, and excited feelings of disgust in those who witnessed it. A rebel had been taken prisoner and was handed over to a trooper to be escorted into camp. His hands being secured behind his back, a rope was fastened

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Captain Wheeler (Maxim.)

Major Robertson. (Cape Boys Corps.)

Captain Straker.

A Group.

Face p. 98.

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round his neck, one end of which was held by his mounted guard. Without any apparent reason, and with no other motive than sheer brutality, the trooper started off at a gallop. The unfortunate captive kept up for some distance, until the pace was purposely made too hot for him, when from sheer exhaustion, he fell forward and was dragged at full length along the rough ground until his body, acting as a brake, caused the rider to pull up. Had this and similar cases which the writer can call to mind been brought under the notice of Colonel Plumer, there is not the shadow of a doubt that the offender would have been very severely dealt with.

After travelling down the Cheza Valley past what is known as the Government Farm, the river Gwai was reached on the 10th June. Crossing the wide sandy bed, which the transport wagons had some difficulty in negotiating, a laager was formed on the far side, between the river and a tall kopje. Here Colonel Plumer decided to divide the Force into two columns. With the one under himself composed of mounted men only, he intended to push forward to the confluence of the Gwai and Umguza Rivers, a point which he expected to reach in two or three days, and which was the *rendezvous* agreed upon to effect a junction with Captain Macfarlane, whose patrol had left Bulawayo simultaneously with our departure from Khami, under instructions to clear the country along the Umguza River, and combine with Colonel Plumer at the place mentioned. The other half of the Force, under Major Kershaw, was detailed to follow on with the wagons to the same destination. On the 12th June a capture of fifty head of cattle was made, together with some sheep and goats, so we were well provided with a supply of fresh meat.

The day following we arrived at the appointed spot.

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Considerable anxiety was caused by the prolonged absence of two of the Scouts—Troopers Pyke and Elliott—who had been sent on the day before, with instructions to ascertain how far distant the place was. Signal rockets were fired and search parties sent out, but no trace was found of the missing men, and there seemed every reason to believe they had been cut off by the rebels.

After an absence of two days they returned safe and sound, and were heartily welcomed by their friends who had given them up as lost. It appears that they failed to notice the spot where the Umguza joins the Gwai, as it does so at an acute angle, and is on that account less noticeable. They had travelled on and on, and in the course of their wanderings had met with a number of the enemy, whom when they met, they commenced firing on as fast as they could load, and succeeded in frightening off, the latter evidently believing that there was a large force close at hand. Being without food, these two had spent anything but a pleasant time, and were much relieved to find themselves safely back with the Column.

So far there were no signs of Captain Macfarlane's Column, which by now was considerably overdue. No answers were received to the frequent signals sent up, and the prevailing opinion was that he had encountered the impis we had missed, and so had been prevented from carrying out his part of the programme.

Two patrols were sent out by Colonel Plumer, to if possible gain touch with the other Column; but no trace of it could be found. It subsequently turned out that the reason was a breakdown in the transport of Macfarlane's force, which prevented his reaching the junction until some days after we had left on the return journey.

Our Column halted here for two days, and rations run-

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ning short, for we had only what we could carry in haversack or wallet, the principal article on the bill of fare was boiled Kaffir corn. Another privation, and one that was felt acutely, was the absence of tobacco in any form. Truly it seemed the very irony of Fate that we should suffer from a lack of that article, which under the conditions of a campaigning life is more a necessity than a luxury, whilst we were travelling along a river whose very name suggested to us daily that which we so much needed.[1]

All kinds of shifts were made to supply the deficiency. As a substitute, the native article was tried; it is a vile and rank-smelling preparation of dried spinach leaves, and was found stowed away in most of the kraals. The smoke derived from the mixture had an evil, pungent flavour, and produced a drowsy effect on the smoker, somewhat similar to that of *daaga*, a compound smoked by the natives in the same way that the Chinese smoke opium. Many preferred to go without altogether; the remainder, while pronouncing it bad, considered it "better than nothing."

Some, by way of experiment, took to smoking the dry leaves of the Mopane bush, but the expression of their faces after a long draw, plainly indicated that the makeshift left much to be desired, and their language was proof positive that its effect was not of a sedative nature. Cigarette smokers really felt the want of the genuine article more than did the devotees of the pipe. In not a few instances as much as *2s. 6d.* was paid for a cigarette, and one man to the writer's knowledge, who was the lucky possessor of twelve packets of "Three Castles" cigarettes, made £5 out of them.

[1] In Matabeleland the word "Gwai" signifies tobacco.

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A half-pound cake of black tobacco fetched £2, whilst a handful of "Boer" was greedily bought in at 5*s.*, and the purchaser was considered a lucky man into the bargain. He was a marked man who happened to possess a few fills towards the end of the patrol, and would be incessantly worried for "just a pinch" by his less fortunate comrades.

The dearth of tobacco was chiefly due to the fact that before starting on the patrol, no opportunity had been given the men to supply themselves with such requisities as come under the heading of "extras," and lacking which the trooper on the line of march finds himself in a somewhat parlous state. Another reason was that each man had relied upon it that others would be amply provided, never for a moment anticipating the prospect of having to go without altogether.

Added to this the men were on half-rations of food, minus also the customary ration of "dop," and they gave expression to their feelings in language that was "painful and frequent, and free."

On June 16th reports came to hand that a strong body of the enemy was concentrated at a spot twenty miles to the west of the Gwai River, the left bank of which we were following up on the back trek. Preparations were at once made to surprise them, and for that purpose a patrol under Major Watts—ever afterwards known as "The Whispering Patrol"—consisting of 180 men, was despatched in the direction indicated.

It seemed almost certain that on this occasion the rebels would be brought to bay. Every precaution was taken to ensure silence; the men were cautioned not to talk, and all orders were to be given in a whisper.

The Scouts, who rode on ahead, noticed a number of

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fires shortly after starting; these had evidently been but recently deserted. Various native *impedimenta*, weapons, cooking utensils, and other belongings which in the hurry of their departure the natives had left behind, were found strewn about. When night fell, the detachment, though travelling at a fair pace, had not come up with the enemy. On halting, the horses were fastened together head to head, in the form of a square, with a line of saddles all round. The men lay down in the space between the two. Pickets were posted at short distances apart, in a circle about fifty yards from the horses, each man keeping a watch of an hour at a time.

No smoking was permitted, nor were fires lighted. Owing to a false alarm which originated inside the laager, some of the men were made to stand to arms for the greater part of the night. The order given to the pickets was to take prisoner any natives who showed themselves, if not more than three in number, but should they appear in a body to open fire and retire on the laager. That the rebels were near the place where the detachment halted for the night, and were on the alert for danger, was made evident before laager was formed.

Major Watts, who had taken every possible precaution to ensure silence, and had brought his men unobserved almost within touch of the enemy, suddenly, and without thinking, gave an order to the trumpeter to sound a call. As the bugle's notes rang out in the stillness of the night, warning rifle-shots replied at gradually receding distances, no doubt fired by the rebel pickets to give the alarm to the main body. Any chance of surprising the enemy was now out of the question.

The rebels, so thoughtfully given the hint, stood not upon the order of their going, and lost no time in putting

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a convenient distance between themselves and the white impi. To discover two natives lying in the grass and to shoot them was the next achievement of "The Whispering Patrol."

The Column was rejoined after an absence of twenty-four hours, when the men, weary and hungry, addressed themselves to the task of attending, in so far as was possible, to their bodily comforts, a more congenial one than that of hunting phantom impis.

Hundreds of kraals were burned all along the valley of the Gwai on both sides of the river. Many of them were well stocked with grain—Kaffir corn, millet, and mealies—fowls, and all descriptions of native-made articles, such as wooden spoons, bowls, and kneading troughs, ostrich feather head-dresses and capes, spears, shields, carved wooden jars, trays, grass mats, skins, armlets, anklets, bead necklaces, and other curios. In some of the kraals were found sun-dried slices of melon, which soaked and boiled were not at all bad when eaten in the guise of vegetables; in others were calabashes containing Kaffir beer, sour milk (amasi), or mutton fat rendered down. The first two offered no attraction whatever as articles of consumption, but the fat was found to be excellent in quality and most useful for cooking purposes.

What little adventure was forthcoming on the patrol fell to the lot of the Scouts, who being in advance of the Column, did most of the kraal-burning, and with whom the monotony of the day's march was greatly relieved by such exciting incidents as the surprising of the enemy's pickets, and the cutting off of small parties of rebels.

Upon the existence of a kraal being reported, a party was told off to pay it a visit. As it was approached, a rush was made to surround it. Any rebel showing himself was

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immediately shot down. All visible occupants having been so disposed of, two or three troopers dismounted and searched the kraal with loaded rifles. Having assured themselves that the place was clear, the remainder of the troop dismounted, and a general stampede was made to secure the loot. The fowls were the chief attraction. Time being limited, and competition of the keenest, the scramble for these feathered delicacies waxed fast and furious. Sticks and stones flew in every direction; fowls fluttered and cackled as they were chased round the huts; the dull thud of blows resounded as a clay granary was beaten in with "knobkerries," or the butts of rifles. Here one might be seen wildly brandishing a ramrod in the attempt to bring down a bird on the wing, whilst another would be found diving in and out of the huts, collecting curios and rummaging amongst unsavoury skins and mats, teeming with vermin of every kind, in the hope of finding a native head-dress, a well-carved spoon, or some other desirable acquisition.

In the midst of all this bustle and excitement, the order "Prepare to mount," would be heard, then a blaze and a roar as the thatches were lighted. Speedily a clearance was made, horses were mounted, fowls and other prizes hurriedly strapped to the saddles, and by the time the party moved off, a column of flame and smoke would be seen mounting skywards through the trees, which, visible for miles round, marked the destruction of another Kaffir homestead. The kraals in many instances bore evidence of having been but recently deserted, the ashes of the fires being still warm, whilst the presence of several miserable-looking Kaffir dogs slinking about the huts, barking and howling when disturbed, would indicate that their owners were not a great distance away. Now and again a wizened

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and superannuated old hag, partially deaf and blind, would be discovered squatting in a hut where her friends had left her to the mercy of circumstances, and, as likely as not with the knowledge that her age and sex would be her protection, for the purpose of spying out the movements of the Column. At every kraal where there was grain, the troopers filled their horses' nose-bags with as much as could be carried away, the remainder being destroyed. This same corn, of which such enormous quantities were almost daily consigned to the flames, was at that time fetching from £10 to £12 per bag in Bulawayo.

During the patrol a great number of horses, from overwork and underfeeding, and also from horse-sickness, either succumbed altogether or were rendered unfit for riding. The same applies to the transport mules, of which about twenty-five per cent. died. Those whose horses were no longer able to carry them were reduced to the necessity of "foot-slogging" along the track in the rear of the wagons, a form of locomotion which by no means added to the pleasures of the trip.

Every one felt the irksome monotony of the march through a practically deserted country, seldom varied by any exciting incident, and relieved only by the hard work necessarily entailed by a column on the move.

The Gwai Patrol took us through a district abounding in game. The tract of country lying between the Gwai and Khami Rivers used to be kept by Lobengula as a royal game preserve, and a big hunt was organised every year during the late king's lifetime. Although game is not now so plentiful, owing to the inroad of the white men and to promiscuous hunting by the natives, as it once was, there still remain numbers of small buck, pheasants, pau, partridges, and guinea fowl; whilst larger game, such as

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riet-buck, sable antelope, and water-buck, were frequently disturbed by the approach of the Column. The spoor of lions, giraffes, and ostriches was also met with occasionally, but the animals themselves were not seen.

During this march, and in fact throughout the Campaign, the constant "meat and meal" diet, without the wholesome addition of vegetables, caused even the healthiest to break out in "veldt sores," or what is known thoughout Australia by the more expressive title of "Barcoo rot." A slight scratch or cut, instead of healing as it would under normal conditions, would at once fester, and by degrees spread into a formidable sore, which often, with the most careful treatment, took weeks to heal. In some instances sores would break out spontaneously and without any previous external injury. Appearing principally on the legs and arms, they rendered the patient, by reason of pain and irritation, unfit for anything but light duty. The bodies of some of the men were dotted all over with these unpleasant eruptions. No doubt a daily dose of limejuice would in a great measure have prevented this veldt scurvy; but whether owing to the lack of suitable provision having been made by the medical officers of the Force, or the difficulty of obtaining it in sufficient quantity, the fact remains that it was only towards the latter part of the Campaign that limejuice was served out to the men at all, and then not frequently enough to be of real service.

A diet consisting solely of meat and flour, continued day after day without any variation, is certain eventually to induce a very unhealthy condition of the blood.

Probably the above accounts for the high percentage of cases during the war, in which comparatively slight wounds terminated fatally.

Take, for instance, the case of a man going into action

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with his constitution broken up and enfeebled by having been living perhaps three, four, or five months on bare rations. His blood is in a bad state for lack of vegetable food or its equivalent. He receives a flesh wound, which probably under normal conditions would be of trifling consequences. It refuses to heal; inflammation further retards progress, and an injury which should take ten days only to heal is barely well at the end of as many weeks. In the event of a fractured bone, the chances were fifty to one against the patient's recovery: a statement which at first sight may appear open to the charge of exaggeration, but which is fully borne out by the experience of the Campaign, and may be readily substantiated by reference to the official records dealing wth the subject. No matter how skilful the surgeon may be, the effects on a system temporarily undermined by poor living are serious in the extreme.

The following may be taken as a specimen of daily routine duties at this time, whilst on the line of march:— Reveille at 5 a.m. Who of us will ever forget the rousing summons in the early morn, as the call rang out sharp and clear on the keen morning air, breaking rudely on the slumbers of tired men snugly ensconced in the folds of their blankets? The laager, which but a few moments before had been an inert mass of recumbent forms, was as if by magic transformed into a scene of life and activity. Great-coats were hurriedly put on, bandoliers slung across the body, rifles were grasped, and each man took his allotted position in the human wall surrounding the laager, and "stood to arms." Scarcely was this done, than the Colonel, accompanied by his staff officers, well muffled up—for these early June mornings were raw and cold—passed round the lines, making a complete tour

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of inspection. Mess orderlies were then given the word to fall out and prepare breakfast. After ten or fifteen minutes the "Fall away" was sounded, when blankets and kits were hastily rolled up and carried over to the wagons, each squadron having its own kit wagon.

At 6.30, stables, grain served out, and horses fed and groomed. As the grooming proceeded, the Colonel strolled up and down the lines, keenly scrutinising the horses' backs, and conferring with the officers of the various squadrons on the state of the mounts under their charge. As the Colonel reached the head of each line, the order would be given, "Stand to your horses," followed immediately by the enjoinder, "Go on with your work."

The rough winter coats of the horses, charged with powdery dust from the previous day's march, resisted all efforts at making them appear presentable; whilst the curry-combs were kept busily at work dislodging the swarms of ticks which had attached themselves in clumps all over the animals' bodies. These ticks were found to be most plentiful on horses in low condition, and were practically ineradicable: the constant drain upon the animal's supply of blood soon reduced it to a very sorry plight, and the semi-starved and jaded brutes in many cases fell away to mere skeletons, as time went on becoming too weak to support a man's weight.

Breakfast was discussed at 7 a.m., after which all cooking utensils were bundled into sacks or boxes, and loaded on the wagons. Next came the warning to saddle up, and at 7.45 a.m., "Boot and saddle." "March," at eight o'clock, when squadrons fell into their respective places as detailed in the "General Orders" of the day before.

With occasional halts, the line of march was resumed until noon or thereabouts, according to the distance to be

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trekked, when a halt would either be made for the remainder of the day, or a rest of two hours taken, and then marching continued until sundown. As the place selected for the night's camp was reached, the Column came to a halt, and the wagons were at once drawn up in laager formation—diamond shape or oblong as the case might be—under the direction of the adjutant.

No sooner were the wagons laagered up, than each squadron stretched its horse-line across the interior, to which the horses were fastened without delay. Saddles were then ranged in line in order of troops, and the men dispersed to collect wood and water and otherwise prepare for the evening's meal. Rations were in the meantime served out under the supervision of the quarter-master sergeant to the squadron "issuers," who in turn issued the provisions to the various messes. Bullocks were shot and cut up, and meat rations served out by the regimental butcher, who retained as perquisites and sold such tit-bits as the tongue, heart, liver and kidneys of the beasts. His was not altogether an enviable billet, and he deserved what extras he made. Had the animals upon which he operated been nothing but "prime joints," all would have been well; as the case stood, his was, however, the thankless task of making a fair division.

Fires by this time were kindled right round the laager at a distance of not less than twenty-five yards from the wagons, and the mess orderlies for the day were soon busily engaged in kneading dough, boiling, roasting, and frying meat, toasting "cookies," and generally getting things in trim for supper. After supper those not on guard indulged in a smoke and yarn round the camp fires, or as it was expressively termed, "passed away the time swapping lies" until "First post" at 8 p.m., "Last post"

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at 8.30, or "Lights out" at 8.45, which brought the day to an end, and each man sought welcome rest beneath the grateful blankets.

In addition to the daily routine of ordinary work, special duties had to be performed by men told off for the purpose.

Squadrons in turn supplied the requisite complement of men for each day's duties, which consisted of Cossack posts, Grazing guard, Horse guard, Pickets, Cattle guard, and sundry fatigues of minor importance.

The sergeant-major of each troop kept a roster, and detailed his men for these duties in such a way that their turns came, so far as possible, in rotation.

This arrangement, as a rule, gave each man three or four nights in bed; that is to say, for the period named he was exempt from night duty on horse guard or picket. All men were available for duty with the exceptions of the Scouts, hospital "orderlies," issuers, officers' batmen (servants), Maxim men, and those medically unfit.

A brief outline of the several duties may further serve to convey some idea of the daily routine of a trooper's life.

Cossack Posts.—On the Column coming to a halt, four parties, each consisting of three mounted men, were stationed at posts allotted to them by the orderly officer for the day, at points commanding a view of the surrounding country so far as bushes and trees permitted, and at a distance of from 100 yards to a quarter of a mile from the wagons, according to the nature of the country or the requirements of the occasion.

The time was divided into three watches, each man doing his turn. The man on duty was required to remain mounted and to keep a sharp look-out to his front, reporting anything of a suspicious nature to the corporal of the guard, whose duty it was to pay frequent visits to the

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several posts. In the afternoon and evening, the Cossack posts would be on duty from the time the Column halted until the pickets for the night were posted, and the same men would in turn have to relieve the pickets at daybreak, and resume their posts until the Column moved away.

Grazing Guard.—Horses were driven away to graze either in the morning immediately after "reveille" (on occasions when there was no grain forthcoming for their breakfast), or at such time as the Column halted for the day, when there was sufficient interval for the purpose between that time and sundown.

The horses of each squadron were kept separate from those of any other squadron when grazing. The duties of the guard—three men and a corporal from each squadron—being to prevent their straying or mingling with those of another squadron, to drive them to water, and bring them up to laager when the bugles sounded "Horses in."

When the Column halted for a whole day, as was sometimes the case, the grazing guard on duty had a long turn, sometimes as much as ten hours.

Horse Guard.—The men detailed for this duty were paraded at night and told off to watch the horse-lines, being required to patrol up and down, see that any horse breaking loose from the line was tied up again, and be generally responsible for the safety and well-being of the animals.

Pickets.—Of all duties, that of outlying pickets is the most responsible, as upon their vigilance the safety of the whole Column throughout the night, when in the enemy's country, is mainly dependent.

There were ordinarily from six to eight posts which were selected by some officer of experience as being most

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suitable for safeguarding the laager. Three men were detailed to each post.

The guard was paraded at sundown by the regimental sergeant-major, when an inspection of arms was made, and they were numbered off in order of guards. After being posted by an officer the first man for duty commenced his watch. The time was so divided as to give each man two hours on and four hours off throughout the night, so that in twelve hours each would have two watches.

The duties of the man on guard were to keep a sharp look-out to his front, to halt and challenge any one approaching the post, to report anything of a suspicious nature to the non.-com. on duty, who in turn communicated with the orderly officer, and in case of attack, to give the alarm and retreat on the laager, firing slowly. On hearing the alarm signal—two G's sounded on the bugle—all pickets were to retire on the laager.

The posts were, as a rule, from eighty to a hundred yards distant from the laager, and that distance or more from each other according to the nature of the position.

The man on sentry was required to patrol up and down between his post and the next one, so that all through the night there was a complete circle of moving sentries round the sleeping laager. On any one approaching, the usual formalities were interchanged, "Halt! who goes there?" etc. Twice or more during the night the orderly officer would visit each post to assure himself that the guards were being properly kept.

As the figure of the approaching officer loomed out of the darkness, the sentry might mistake it for that of the other sentry from the next post, and instead of using the prescribed formula, would greet him familiarly with "Hullo,

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Smith, is that you?" In place of the friendly reply, "Yes; how's things?" comes the unlooked-for rejoinder, "Why the devil, sir, don't you halt and challenge?" with such additional expletives and threats as the scandalised representative of military discipline might deem suitable to the occasion.

The countersign for the night was always read out at orders each afternoon. In the event of a man being absent from parade, and neglecting to inquire, he was liable to find himself in a somewhat awkward predicament.

As a case in point. A trooper had gone down to the sluit for water after the sentries were posted. On returning he was challenged, but not knowing the password the sentry refused to let him pass. "Hang it all!" pleaded the delinquent, "you know me well enough. What's the use of playing the fool at this time of night?" "Can't be helped," was the retort. "You know the orders, and unless you give the countersign there you are and there you remain." And so he did until some time in the small hours of the morning, when the visiting officer assumed the responsibility of admitting him within the lines.

On another occasion the countersign was "Nordenfeldt." A "friend" on approaching the picket had a hazy recollection that some sort of a gun was mentioned, but which he failed to remember. In answer to the challenge he gave 'Maxim." "That's not it," stated the sentry. "Oh, well, the other kind of gun," hazarded the man. The sentry considered that "near enough," and let him pass.

A picket yarn of the Campaign, which has already found its way into print, is worth repeating here. An orderly officer, on going his rounds, was astonished to find himself challenged, or rather "sung at" in this fashion, "Hi tiddle de hi ti! who goes there?" The astonished officer in-

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Old B B.P. men in the M.R.F.

Face p. 114.

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quired what this extraordinary behaviour meant, when the sentry replied that the last time he was on duty he had been told to give the challenge in a more musical voice, and that was the only tune he knew!

In order that there might be no doubt as to the sentries being awake and at their respectives posts, each one had to call out the number of the post every half-hour. Thus, No. 1 started with "No. 1, and all's well," which would be answered in like manner by No. 2, and so on in turn round the line of pickets. Should the sentry next in order fail to respond, the previous number had to repeat until it was answered.

As a general rule, these calls were neither cheerful nor harmonious. Some howled out the refrain in a long-drawn, dismal tone, compared to which the cry of the jackal was pleasing melody. The mournful statement would perhaps elicit from the next a well-pitched and plainly articulated call, followed after a pause by another, bleated forth by a man with a cold in his head. Others again were given to chanting in Gregorian tones.

Lying snugly rolled up between the blankets on a cold night, it was vastly entertaining to listen for, and criticise the picket calls. But perhaps a night or two later, when stamping about to keep up the circulation, the rifle barrel feeling like a lump of ice, and the great-coat barely sufficing to keep out the sharp piercing wind, the humours of the situation were by no means so apparent.

Although this custom of picket calls was, with few exceptions, observed throughout the Campaign, surrounded as we often were by the enemy it appeared hardly a wise proceeding to call his attention to the exact locality of each post in this way. If it was intended to acquaint the rebels that the white man was on the *qui vive*, it had its

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use, but it certainly increased the danger attending picket duty in no small degree. This much may be said, it was quite in keeping with the other tactics peculiar to the Gwai Patrol.

Without dwelling at any length upon the hardships and privations undergone—for none of us expected a picnic—there are several matters which call for attention in connection with this patrol, and which were not so noticeable, or did not exist, later in the Campaign.

First, as regards clothes. Unlike those of the Israelites of old, the garments of a trooper were not proof against the wear and tear to which they were exposed. Having only a very limited supply of wearing apparel—in fact, just what each man stood up in—the rough work, the damage sustained after travelling through country abounding in thorn-bush, and the difficulty of obtaining materials for executing repairs, left many in a tattered and torn condition. On the patrol were men who, as members of a civilised community, had been noted for a scrupulous regard to personal appearance now become wholly unrecognisable save by their names.

Divest the average Englishman of his well-fitting garments, and in their place substitute "slop-made" articles of attire one or two sizes too small, the coat with as much "cut" about it as a sack, a pair of Khaki continuations terminating anywhere between the ankle and knee. Let his feet be encased in white cotton socks and a pair of heavy "ammunition boots." Take an ordinary wide-brimmed felt hat of uncertain age, shape, and colour, and put it on his head—and for the purpose he should have a three weeks' stubbly growth of hair on his face; he will then afford a living presentment of the typical M.R.F. trooper, as he appeared on the Gwai Patrol.

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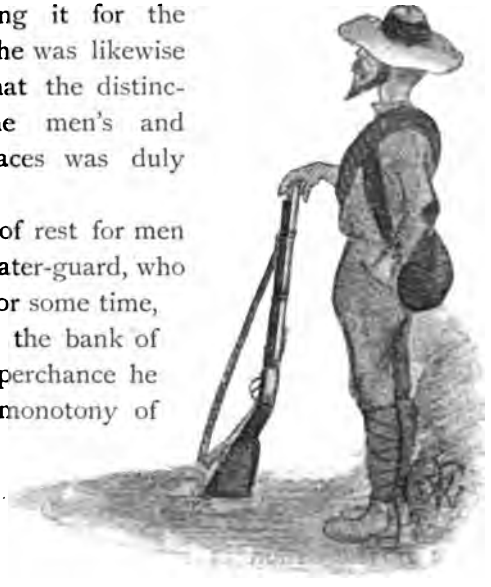
In addition to these disabilities it must be remembered that the opportunities for bathing, shaving, and toilet in general, were few and far between. Many, of course, never missed the chance of performing their ablutions, even if it entailed a scramble for meals; but there were others who only washed on special occasions, or when there was nothing else to do, or who neglected to wash altogether.

The officers, having plenty of time comparatively at their disposal, were not reduced to similar straits. Where a prolonged halt was made by the Column at any one place, the available water was divided off into sections: one for drinking purposes, one for the men to wash in, and one for the officers.

A guard was placed over the drinking-water supply whose duty it was to prevent any one from mistaking it for the washing pool, and he was likewise required to see that the distinctions between the men's and officers' bathing-places was duly observed.

One day—a day of rest for men and horses—the water-guard, who had been on duty for some time, took a stroll along the bank of the sluit, thinking perchance he might relieve the monotony of his watch by "slanging" some wrong-doer. Turning to retrace his steps, he spied the



TROOPER ON THE GWAI PATROL AS HE PARADED FOR DUTY.

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nude figure of an elderly man, who was gingerly picking his way down to the officers' pool preparatory to a plunge. "Just nabbed him in time," thought the guard, recognising, as it seemed to him, a man in his own squadron. Without waiting to make sure of the fact, he began, "Now, you old scoundrel, come out o' that; you know the officers' pool. Go and wash your dirty——" But the sentence was never completed. At this moment the person thus addressed turned his head, disclosing, to the utter discomfiture of the guard, the well-known features of the Colonel.

Too dismayed even to sputter out an apology, the over-zealous trooper retired from the gaze of his commanding officer, leaving the latter to proceed with his bathing in peace.

But to revert to the question of food. As has been already hinted, the food supplied was distinctly limited.

For the greater part of the patrol the Column was kept on half-rations. These rations, besides being small in quantity, were execrable in quality, and reflected great discredit on those responsible for the stocking of the Commissariat. Salt, sugar, and coffee ran out before the end of the patrol, a contingency possibly unavoidable under the circumstances.

Even, however, allowing for the limitation of the transport train, there was no reason why the veriest refuse should have been carried: the same space might with equal ease have been occupied by provisions more suitable for human consumption.

This fact was so widely remarked upon, that the writer has no hesitation in recording it, even at the risk of appearing to be a prejudiced party.

What little was doled out day by day had to be made

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the most of. With rice, meal, fat, and baking-powder, much may be done in the way of bread-baking.

The lowest form of "cooky" is simply meal, salt, and water, kneaded up into small cakes, and baked on the embers; these are satisfying, but not very easy of digestion.

The next grade is that which has baking-powder or sour dough as a leavening agent. Skilfully made and cooked with care on the gridiron, these make excellent bread, and are particularly adapted for carrying in the haversack on patrols, as they will stand a great deal of knocking about.

Then there is the "fat cooky," best made by pouring melted fat over the flour and rubbing it in well: a little sugar, salt, and baking-powder added, render these very palatable—too much so when rations are scarce—so they cannot be recommended on the score of economy. To further eke out the small quantity of flour, a good plan is to add to it, before kneading, about the same amount of boiled rice. This was a "wrinkle" worth knowing, the resulting "cookies" being more in number, lighter, and nearly as satisfying. When fat was plentiful, "cookies" fried, or rather stewed in it, until most of the liquor was absorbed, were not to be despised in cold weather, but were only to be approached with caution by those of a weak digestion. Salad oil was sometimes used as a substitute for fat, but when served out for the purpose of cleaning rifles, can scarcely be regarded as a legitimate article for culinary use.

Meal (Boer) and flour were both carried and served out, the former being by far the more wholesome of the two.

Next to these the principal item—when fresh meat was not procurable—was "bully" (bouilli)—beef issued in half

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and one pound tins, the labels of which bore the names of Libby, McNeill & Libby, or Armour & Co., Chicago. When there is absolutely nothing else to eat in the shape of meat, bully beef may be regarded as a desirable stop-gap. It varied much in quality, the contents of some tins being like brawn, whilst a great proportion of it was fibrous and tough, falling to pieces at the mere suggestion of carving. Being very salt it was not wise to eat much at breakfast, as the thirst induced thereby might not be quenched, except at long intervals, during the day's march. The best tribute one can pay to its briny memory is to remark that oftentimes even it was a friend in need.

On the next patrol (Thabas Amamba), when three or four days north of Bulawayo, it was discovered that a large percentage of the bully beef loaded on the wagons was unfit for food—a matter which caused Colonel Plumer considerable anxiety, as with such a number of men (1,200 or so) and no meat, the outlook was indeed serious. This particular consignment was part of a quantity that had been stored at Tuli, where, in the early part of the rebellion, cases of it had been used in constructing the walls of the fort. Having been tumbled and knocked about, a number of the tins were damaged and air admitted, which of course rendered the meat unwholesome, if not poisonous. On this being discovered, it was stated in "Orders" that a Committee of Investigation, consisting of Colonel Plumer, Major Bodle, and Captain Scott Turner, would "sit on the beef"; which was done. Thus each day, until a supply of fresh meat rendered it unnecessary, the tins to be issued for that day were opened in the presence of these officers, who decided by test of smell as to the fitness or otherwise of every tin, any one with the slightest suspicion of taint being at once rejected.

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When it is stated that between 300 and 400 tins had to be so inspected per diem, it can be readily understood how the task of "sitting on the beef" was neither a light nor a pleasant one. Occasionally the men were served out with Weil's "road rations." These, consisting of beef or mutton, with a certain proportion of vegetables, were more wholesome and infinitely more palatable, but being less economical were not often issued.

Amongst other articles that ran short, as already stated, was sugar. A capital substitute for this was found in many of the kraals in the shape of "imfi," or native sugar-cane. The natives split open the canes, or reeds, and extract the pith, which, after drying, they store away in bundles. This pith contains a high percentage of saccharine matter, and when boiled down, the resulting liquor answers all the purposes of sugar. Some provided themselves with saccharine tabloids, which were found to be most excellent value. A small flat bottle containing one hundred of these goes a long way, two tabloids being sufficient to sweeten a pannikin of tea. So good an example of a serviceable *multum in parvo* were these tabloids, that it is to be wondered they were not more generally used.

Tea tabloids are also good in their way; but after the box is once opened, the contents, jolting about in the haversack, soon get reduced to powder.

When baking-powder was scarce, Eno's Fruit Salt made an excellent if a somewhat expensive substitute.

Cocoa is always worth carrying: the luxury of a drink of cocoa on a cold night, or before the sun rises on a frosty morning, is not readily forgotten.

It is astonishing what an amount of wood is consumed for fuel by a column five or six hundred strong. No

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sooner did the troops come to a halt, than a general rush was made to secure a supply of wood. In many places where timber was scarce, those who had not been among the lucky first to off-saddle, frequently had to trudge a considerable distance to get sufficient for cooking purposes, and occasionally dry dung was the only fuel to be obtained.

Sometimes it was necessary to go to rest in full marching order—always, for instance, when on picket duty—at which time the bandolier with its fifty rounds had to be worn, and this was by no means comfortable. As a rule it was possible to take off boots and tunic; the wearing of the former is not at all conducive to sleep, especially on a very cold night, when they interfere with the proper circulation of the blood, and the weary feet remain like blocks of stone within them. Sleeping continually in boots soon renders the feet very sore, unless they have been previously accustomed to such treatment.

Not infrequently, the portion of bare ground allotted to an individual to sleep on would have a lump of granite projecting particularly inconveniently. It was impossible to move to one side or the other for fear of encroaching on another man's space, and so the offending bed-rock would have to be negotiated as best it might.

So severe was the cold at night that the men were often kept awake by it. Some preferred to sleep with their overcoats on, others laying them over the blanket. One man used to adopt a novel method; putting his feet and legs down the arms of his great-coat as far as they would go, he would then button it up, and with the ends reversed, turned in to sleep. He was rather proud of the patent, but had few imitators.

One of the most aggravating occurrences was when a

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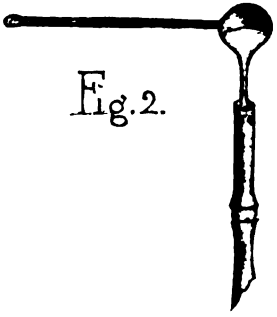

Fig. 2.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 3.

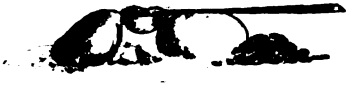

Fig. 1.

MATABELE BULLET MOULD.

Showing how the Kaffirs manufacture their own bullets for re-loading Martini-Henry ammunition.

A reed of the required bore is obtained and the pith is extracted. The lead is melted in a spoon and poured into the reed mould, which produces a well-rounded bullet.

Fig. 1.—Melting the lead.
,, 2.—Pouring the lead into the mould.
,, 3.—Section of reed mould, showing bullet.
,, 4.—Bullet ready for use.

Kaal Kwmalo taught the Matabele this method of making Martini-Henry bullets.

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man, on repairing to the kit wagon for his roll of blankets, failed to find it, and perforce had to spend the night without as best he could. This "jumping" of kits was by no means uncommon, and after dark it was quite impracticable to institute a search amongst such a number of men. The missing kit might or might not turn up again, according to the luck of the owner or the humour of the purloiner. One victim averred that he had lost two lots of kit in this manner, and really despaired of obtaining a third.

Events of this nature were too frequent even for the most tolerant to treat them with indifference; the inconvenience and discomfort entailed can only be realised by those who have been sufferers. Colonel Plumer made some very appropriate remarks on the subject to the assembled troops at Khami, and threatened to deal very severely with any offender brought before him on this count. As he truly said, all kits, officers' included, were at the mercy of men disposed to thieve, and he begged all to keep a sharp look-out and report the culprits. It was a question affecting the general character of the whole corps, and he would be very sorry that the men under his command should get a bad name owing to the unsoldierly conduct of a few blackguards.

The Gwai Patrol terminated with the return of the Column to Khami Fort. Here a store wagon was found awaiting its arrival, stocked with a fair supply of tobacco and other articles which for so long had been conspicuous by their absence. Needless to say it was literally "rushed." This wagon had been brought from Bulawayo by an enterprising individual who, making the most of the monopoly, bled his customers to the utmost limit, charging the most exorbitant prices for everything.

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Major Vyvyan. Captain the Hon. J. Beresford. Lieut.-Colonel Plumer.
Lieut. Fraser. Captain Scott Turner. (Adjutant.) Major-General Sir F. Carrington.

A Group of Officers.

Face p. 124.

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At most times and under other conditions, these prices would have been prohibitive; but the men, not knowing when the next opportunity of laying in a supply of necessaries might present itself, did not stop to count the cost, with the result that the contents of the wagon were speedily transferred to the troops, at a profit of 100 per cent. on cost at Bulawayo.

Later on, at the Matoppo Camps, the authorities opened a dry canteen for the supply of extras at reasonable rates; until then however, the troops were cheated right and left by these travelling hawkers. It is a matter for surprise that provision was not made for the men of the Column to get fair value for money throughout the Campaign. Prices ruling in Bulawayo at the time were high enough to shake the nerves of most, but when these were further augmented by hawkers' profits they became absolutely ruinous.

So discontented were the men at the small amount of consideration paid to their well-being during the Gwai Patrol, that on returning, about one-sixth of them formally applied for their discharges from the Force.

At first it was supposed that it was only a few malcontents who had had enough of the business; but a parade of the applicants disclosed the fact that a very appreciable number wished to leave.

Colonel Plumer, on learning how matters stood, refused to grant any discharges unless the applicant could show a certificate of medical unfitness, or any other urgent reason for not remaining.

In a speech to the men on general parade, the Colonel stated that no man could demand his discharge; each member of the Force had signed to serve for such a period as his services might be required, and there was still much to be done. Although they had seen no fighting to speak

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of on the patrol, they had been over a large tract of country in a comparatively short space of time, and had accomplished some good work. He did not under-estimate, he said, the hardships they had been called upon to undergo or the amount of work entailed, and further, he was pleased at the readiness and goodwill with which the duties had been performed.

On Sunday, June 28th, the General drove out to Khami from Bulawayo and inspected the troops at noon. His address was marked by characteristic brevity. He is essentially a man of few words, what he has to say being concise and to the point.

After the inspection was over, those who had served under "Freddy" before were lined up. There were thirty or so who had this distinction, and the General as he walked down the line, cordially greeted several "old hands" as he identified them. General Carrington prides himself, and with some reason, on having a remarkable memory for faces. Some of the men he had not seen for years, but he instantly recognised them and recalled the circumstances under which they had last met.

His successful career as a commander in Kaffir warfare marked General Carrington as the one man best qualified to deal with the troubles in Rhodesia, and his appointment by the Imperial authorities carried with it a universal feeling of satisfaction.

Three years ago this same officer was sent out to conduct operations during the first Matabele War; but he was too late, for on arriving at Cape Town, he found that it was practically over, and that his presence was therefore not required: a state of things not very pleasing to him.

The members of the Column and their worn-out steeds were not given much time to recruit themselves after the

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recent fatigues; arriving at Khami on the 25th June, they were marched off for Thabas Amamba on the 28th.

Whilst at Khami the writer happened on a night adventure which, though of small importance, had its amusing side. It happened thus:—

A number of cattle captured on the Gwai had, it was discovered, broken out of their "scherm" and wandered off. Five of us under a corporal received orders just after sundown to saddle up and go in search of the stray animals. Being pitch-dark, and as no information was forthcoming as to the direction they had taken, the probability of their being recovered was extremely remote. However, the word was given to proceed across the veldt in extended order towards "Matabele Wilson's," about eight miles distant, where there was a fort and a store, the latter kept by a local celebrity of that name. After a fruitless search, the fort was reached, where it was found that a certain lieutenant and several men from another squadron were also on a visit from the Column. Having partaken of such food and refreshment as were obtainable at the store, horses were re-saddled and a start homewards was made under the charge of the aforesaid lieutenant, who, for what reason is not apparent, was best known amongst his men as "The Knave of Clubs." It was noticed at the fort that this O.C. had without doubt been indulging in something more stimulating than coffee. His manner was boisterous and free. His leave-taking as we started away was somewhat unduly familiar. As we filed down the steep incline towards the road, the sound of independent firing from the rifles of the fort seemed to indicate that the carousal had been general; if intended as a parting salute, it was agreed that at least they might have made a better attempt at a volley.

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No sooner was the road reached than it was noticed that the officer who was taking the lead was not going to be a success. He was scarcely able to sit upright on his horse; none the less, with a forced attempt at authority as ludicrous as it was futile, he commenced giving orders: The first was, "Left incline," so to the left we inclined; then, "Left wheel." We wheeled accordingly, with the result that we found ourselves back at the fort. This seemed to puzzle him, so he gave the order to dismount, probably thinking that if he started again at the beginning, all would be well.

On mounting again, the troop, purposely deaf, kept straight along the road. In a few moments came the order, "From your centre extend." We did so, and were advancing across the veldt in skirmishing order, when it was discovered that the officer had stayed behind. After a while some one went back for him. Coming up with the line he shouted, "On your centre close," then "Halt," "Front form," "Prepare to dismount," and "Dismount." With the last order, he rolled from his saddle on to the ground and lay there under a bush, placidly oblivious to his surroundings. He was given fifteen minutes to come round, at the end of which time, as he seemed likely unless assisted to remain there until next morning, the corporal respectfully roused him, and made a suggestion on the subject of returning to Khami. "Quite right, a capital idea," he replied, and gave the order to mount.

Another start was made, and the troop was progressing slowly, when suddenly the clatter of hoofs was heard on the left. On came the gallant commander at top speed, swaying backwards and forwards in the saddle and yelling loudly. The horse he was on, frightened no doubt by the

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extraordinary antics of its rider, was evidently off on its own account, and odds seemed in favour of "The Knave of Clubs" getting his neck broken. So two or three galloped off to surround him, and succeeded fortunately in stopping the runaway.

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CHAPTER IV

The Attack on Thabas Amamba

Organisation of the Column—The Road to the Battlefield—Laagering up—The Adventures of a Convoy—Experiences of a Cossack Post—The Fight—Storming the Heights—With the Cape Boys—With Captain Boggie's Dismounted Troop—With Taylor's Scouts—Mr. Rhodes under Fire—An Enterprising Journalist—Burial of the Killed—A Pathetic Incident—After the Fight—Colonel Plumer's Soldierly Action—Back at Umgusa—General Carrington assumes Command—On to the Matoppos.

NEWS having been received that the rebel Matabele were massed in great force at a stronghold among some hills beyond Inyati, known as Thabas Amamba, about sixty-five miles north of Bulawayo, Major-General Carrington decided to despatch a column to that place to engage and dislodge them, and if possible to bring them to a decisive action in the open country beyond.

With the exception of 150 men left at Khami—100 of whom were on July 1st sent to Mashonaland under Major Watts to assist in the operations in that country—all the Matabeleland Relief Force under Colonel Plumer left Khami on June 28th, and passing through Bulawayo, marched to the Welsh Harp on the Umguza River, which was reached the following day. Here the Column halted for one day, awaiting supplies and reinforcements. The latter consisted of the Bulawayo Squadron, M.M.P., Mounted Scouts, C Troop Dismounted, and the Native

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Contingent; all of these belonging to the Bulawayo Field Force.

Rations for the Force for twenty days were taken, 200 rounds of ammunition per man, and a large reserve of ammunition for all arms. A section of No. 10 Mountain Battery, R.A., from Natal, with 2·5 inch screw guns under Lieutenant R. H. F. McCullock, R.A., accompanied the Column. There were also forty wagons for the transport of kit, provisions, and M.-H. ammunition, and two ambulance wagons.

LOOK-OUT HUT AND BEACON.

When riding through the hills on the day following the battle of Thabas Amamba, we came upon several of these, placed on kopjes commanding the approaches to the stronghold. It was evident that the natives were taken by surprise, as none of these beacons were fired, although the hut in close proximity would suggest that a keen look-out was kept.

The numerical strength of the Column, including natives, Cape Boys (drivers), etc., was about 1,200, and was by far the largest yet concentrated in Rhodesia. It presented an imposing appearance when, nearly a mile in length, with flanking parties on either side, it slowly trailed across the open, undulating country. With such

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a large force under him, the splendid organising abilities of Colonel Plumer were brought into full play.

After two days on the line of march, the movements in connection with the formation and breaking up of laager were executed with the utmost precision and order. So thorough was the organisation, that confusion was almost impossible, and the individual, often to his surprise, recognised that the conditions of life were quite as comfortable when a unit of one thousand as they had been when a unit of only fifty. Of course this would not have been the case without the adjutant's unflagging energy and perfect grasp of the respective duties of the men. Captain Scott Turner and the no less indispensable Regimental Sergeant-Major Clements were the principal factors in the executive system.

Making of Laager.

The following instructions read out in "Orders," together with the accompanying diagram, will serve to show the general disposition of the various branches of the Force, and the regulations by which they were guided in the making and breaking up of laager :—

"Every waggon will carry its own number.

"The wagons will invariably come into laager and leave laager in succession. Should any alteration be necessary, the spans will be changed, but the position of the wagons will remain fixed.

"About half an hour before laagering, a party of officers will be sent forward to reconnoitre the ground to be selected. The ground having been agreed upon, the adjutant will cause "Orderly sergeants" to be sounded, which will be repeated all along the Column. Orderlies will be instructed as to the places to be occupied by their

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squadron, as to what squadron is to find the duties, and what the duties are and the hour of mounting. The squadrons will then move to their own places and will dismount, but not off-saddle, at least 100 yards clear of the laager. The wagons will then move into position, and as soon as they are all placed, the squadrons will move to their places and off-saddle, detailing parties to fix picket-ropes, while the cooks and mess orderlies will fall out and start making fires over twenty and under 100 yards from the laager.

"Immediately the horses are off-saddled, they will file away by squadrons to their lines, or else to grass or water.

"The Cossack posts will, immediately the advance guard halts, be fallen in by the adjutant and handed over to the orderly officer, who will place them under direction of a senior officer.

"Major Bodle will attend to the correct placing of the wagons, Maxims, and field-guns.

"As soon as all the duties are complete, the men will file in opposite their saddles and wait for their orders.

"The guard will invariably sleep in front of 'A' squadron lines, and all duties will parade there; all cattle to be driven by a guard detailed from the Cape Boys, who will always be responsible for the construction of the kraal and the safety of the cattle.

"On the march, squadron issuers will accompany their squadron kit wagons, and will be responsible for the safety of the kits, and they will also see that wagons are properly packed fifteen minutes before the hour fixed for starting."

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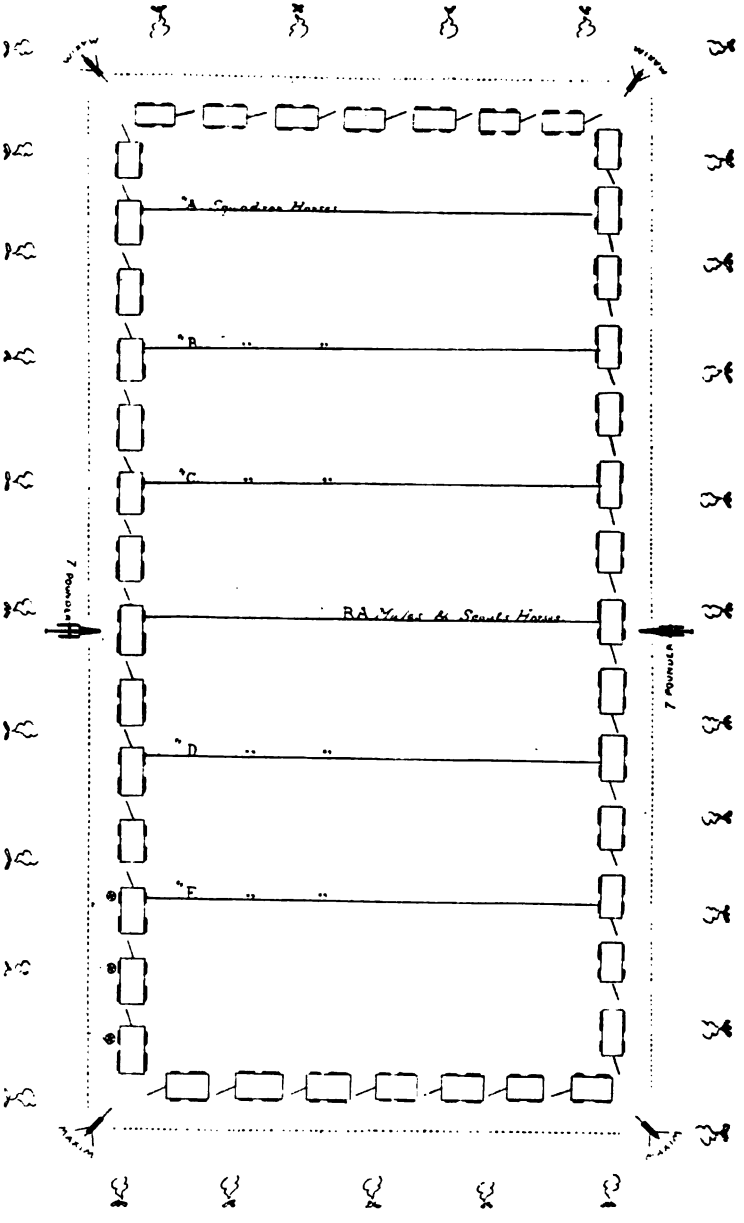

FORMATION OF THE LAAGER AT INYATI ON THE WAY TO THABAS AMAMBA ON THE EVE OF THE BATTLE.

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BREAKING UP OF LAAGER.

"About one hour before marching off, 'Orderly sergeants' will sound. Details as to the march will be given out by the adjutant. As far as possible the following programme will be adhered to :—

5 a.m. Reveille and stand to arms.
5.30. Pack up kits.
6. Stables and feed.
6.45. Orderly sergeants.
7. Breakfast.
7.30. Boot and saddle. In picket-ropes.
7.45. Warning.
All men before marching, to parade in front of 'A' squadron lines. All sick in centre of laager. All horses to be driven in rear of laager.
8. Fall in. Orderly officer to warn Cossack posts to join their squadrons."

During the day's halt at the Welsh Harp, supplies of tobacco and mess extras were obtained ; some were able to send back to Bulawayo, whilst two or three hawkers who followed up the Column found plenty of customers for their stock-in-trade. With the past experience of the Gwai Patrol, it is hardly necessary to mention that every one laid in a stock of requisites for the three weeks they were to be out of touch with stores.

In this connection an amusing incident occurred. Early in the day, a sharp look-out was kept for the store-wagon, on the principle of "first come first served"; for no one was desirous of running short of tobacco, at any rate if it could possibly be avoided, and there was always a rush for the store-wagon. Sure enough, as expected, a well-stocked mule-wagon hove in sight round a bend in the

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road. An over-anxious trooper, to make assurance doubly sure, hastened over from the laager to meet it. As he neared the wagon he hailed its occupants. "Hi there! Pull up!" It did so, and at the same time a head appeared from inside the covering with the inquiry, "Well, what do you want?" "What have you got?" was the reply. "Who is this man?" came the muttered rejoinder from the obtruding head. "Look here," continued the trooper, "have you any soap, matches, tobacco, candles?" "No," remarked the supposed purveyor of these articles, at the same time smiling and telling the driver to "Go ahead!" Upon this the would-be customer started giving his opinion on the state of affairs. "Well, a nice sort you are, I don't think. No tobacco, no soap; what the so-and-so and so-and-so do you come out here for?" and with a varied assortment of choice expletives, the disappointed trooper returned to his lines. This is probably the only time that Mr. Cecil Rhodes was ever mistaken for a travelling hawker.

Mr. Rhodes and his brother, Colonel F. Rhodes, accompanied the Column in a private wagon right through the Thabas Amamba Patrol, and were familiar figures both on the line of march and during the engagement.

After leaving the Welsh Harp, the Column proceeded to the Xoca River (this word is pronounced by means of two distinct clicks), and thence—leaving the historic Bembezi battle-field on the right—to Rhodes' Farm. From here to Inyati is a distance of about twenty miles, which took two days to cover.

Inyati being the base for the attack on Thabas Amamba, arrangements were made for a night march, to be followed by an attack upon the stronghold, distant from Inyati about sixteen miles, at dawn.

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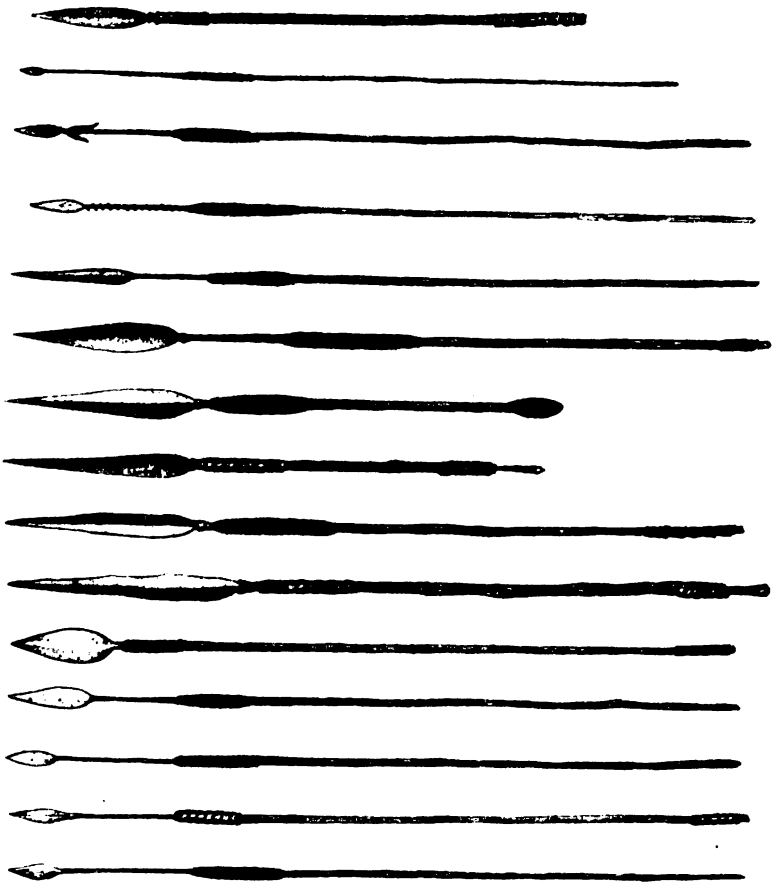

Types of Assegais used by the natives during the rebellion and handed in by them on surrendering.

Face p. 136.

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The enemy's position is thus described by Major Robertson, commanding the Cape Boys, and no one is in a better position to give it, as he and his plucky followers bore the brunt of the fighting on Sunday, July 5th. The correct native name is Izintabas Zika Mambo, meaning Mambo's Mountains. The place has been erroneously designated, since the fight there, as Thabas Amamba, and as this name is the more easily recognised, the author has used it here.

"Thabas Amamba consists of a range of hills running north and south, and rising abruptly from a plain which is seen gradually ascending in an easterly direction. The range is about five miles in length. Along the western slope the face of the hills is almost precipitous, with numerous clefts and gorges opening to the country beyond—that is to say, to the east. The top of the range may be described as a series of peaks, somewhat elongated in a northerly and southerly direction, having for their summits gigantic granite boulders piled on the top of each other, frequently to a height of 400 or 500 feet. Large openings between the boulders form hundreds of natural caves. The bush known as the 'wach-een-bitje' thorn, and multitudes of different kinds of creepers, also of a thorny nature, grow in abundance in every nook and corner where it is possible for roots to get a holding. This description of the western portion of the Thabas Amamba, so far as the boulders, caves, trees, and shrubs are concerned, applies equally to the eastern or interior of the group of hills. Shooting out from the eastern slope of the range are numerous spurs, now descending, now ascending, and finally culminating in other hills; so that a series of minor ranges run from west to east from the main range, about seven of which extend in an easterly direction for a dis-

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tance of about four and a half miles, that on the northern extremity being nearly as lofty as the main range. Towards the eastern extremity of the Thabas Amamba, the Insungu River intersects the hills in a northerly and southerly direction, from which hills numerous rivulets and tributaries flow into it. Between the spurs above described there are numerous valleys, some not more than 100 yards, others nearly a mile in width, all of them intersected with watercourses and overgrown with dense bush, with but few clearings. Towards the eastern extremity of the hills may be seen what is now known as the rebel stronghold. This consists of a conical-shaped hill rising abruptly to a height of about 400 feet, and divided from the main stronghold, still further east, by a broad, sandy-bedded watercourse. The stronghold itself rises out of this watercourse, with an almost precipitous face, to a height of from 500 to 600 feet, formed of gigantic boulders, with innumerable caves of great dimensions, and a perfect maze of thorns and shrubbery. Along the eastern base of this fastness the Insungu River is seen, enclosed by another range of lofty hills, almost as precipitous and equally as high as the stronghold itself. The whole group covers an area of some 25 square miles."

The exact disposition of the rebel impis, together with other valuable information, was obtained by one John Grootboom, a Colony "boy," who travelled on foot to Thabas Amamba, and succeeded in approaching at night within ear-shot of the rebels. His assistance to the white man throughout the Campaign was invaluable, and his exploits, as narrated in another place, are amongst the most exciting incidents of the war.

The plan of attack was concisely and clearly explained to the assembled officers of the various detachments and

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squadrons by Colonel Plumer, and everything was put in readiness for the night march on that evening of Saturday, July 4th. The Dismounted Troop ("C") of the B.F.F. the Cape Boys Corps, and the Mountain Battery, having to do the journey on foot, were the first to leave camp at Inyati. They marched out between three and four in the afternoon. Just after sundown the detachments, squadrons, and the naval carriage Maxims, paraded and filed off under a grey, leaden sky.

Instructions were given that the march was to be conducted in the strictest silence, smoking and talking being alike forbidden. The ambulance and transport wagons (for kit and provisions), five in number, were instructed to proceed from Inyati at 2 a.m. the following morning, with a convoy of thirty-five mounted men and a tripod Maxim, under Lieutenant Abbott, and to join the Column at the place of attack at daybreak.

Adventures of a Convoy.

After the main Column had left, the wagons, Maxim, and escort, under Lieutenant Abbott, crossed the drift and laagered up about a quarter of a mile on the other side, where we waited the hour appointed for marching. The night was bitterly cold, but each man lay down in front of his saddle, huddled up in his great-coat, to snatch what sleep he might, as there was no knowing how long it would be before another opportunity would offer itself for rest. Not long after midnight the men were roused and ordered to saddle up, the mules were inspanned, and the little troop told off into sections for advance guard, rear guard, and flanking patrols.

It was pitch dark, and as the escort spread over the veldt in extended order, several came to grief among the

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mere cat-holes. The wagons started away at a brisk trot, and it was no easy matter to keep in line with them amongst the thorn bushes and rocks when flanking 150 yards on the right or left. At one moment the rider would find himself boring through the overhanging branches of two camel-thorn trees, the next his jaded animal would be scrambling over an outcrop of granite boulders. After about three hours and a half of this sort of travelling, it was no small relief to see the dim grey light of dawn showing through the trees.

Towards the latter part of the march the country became rougher still and the progress more slow.

Suddenly a rifle-shot was heard away in the distance. This was followed by several more, and then the report of big guns told that the main Column was engaged. Crossing a drift with steep banks on either side, the pace was increased, and within twenty minutes the convoy arrived at the base of Thabas Amamba. Nothing could be seen of the Column; but the sound of firing, away amongst the hills in every direction, made it evident that the various detachments were hotly engaged. The wagons were quickly drawn up into laager formation, the horses off-saddled and tied up inside, the tripod Maxim set up, and twelve men paraded for Cossack post duty. It was decided to station two posts upon the rocks overlooking the laager, and two on the flat country behind.

The experiences of these hill-posts is best related in the words of one of their number.

"I was detailed, with two others, to keep watch from the heights on the right front of the laager. As we followed the steep track, winding upwards amongst the boulders and bushes, a shot close behind me and 'That's got him!' from Sergeant-Major Mallett, called our atten-

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tion to the writhing figure of a native under a rock to the left. Lieutenant Oakley administered the *coup de grace* with a revolver bullet, and on we went towards the top. Climbing then began. In a few minutes the summit was reached. There we were posted for the day, with instructions to hold the position in case of attack as long as possible and then retire on the laager. With this the officer and sergeant-major left us to our own devices. It was now about seven in the morning. Choosing a spot behind a slab of rock breast high, fairly isolated, and with almost precipitous approach on three sides, we sought cover, and were able to take stock of the situation. Immediately in front and behind us was a circular plateau, fringed round with rocks and bushes; these in turn gave way to a deep descent into the valley 600 or 700 feet below. Beyond, to the right and in front, the eye travelled over a vast expanse of wild, broken country; of hills upon hills, with sides more or less covered with bush, according to the abruptness of their declivity, each topped with giant obelisks, columns, and turret-shaped masses of granite, standing out clear-cut and bold against the sky-line. Here and there could be seen bold faces of smooth rock, rising up nearly vertically for 200 or 300 feet, symmetrically rounded off towards the top, upon which rested immense blocks of stone—either solitary, and so the more conspicuous, or piled up in confused masses. It was a beautiful morning. A strong southerly breeze tempered the heat of the sun, and as one took in the full beauty of the surrounding scenery, it seemed hard to realise that the day and the place were being devoted entirely to the work of slaughter. As the rifle-shots rang out from the valleys and slopes, now far away in the distance, now close at hand, one was strongly reminded of a day amongst the

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'birds' at home; but in this case the beaters were Cape Boys, and the game human beings. Every now and again the weird howl or war-cry of the hunted Kaffirs resounding amongst the rocks would be borne down the wind, and white puffs of smoke would be seen issuing here and

CAPE BOYS STORMING A KOPJE.

there from the rocky crevices or from behind the boulders. Further away the heavy reports of the big guns came booming and reverberating through the kopjes, followed on by a continuous rattle of musketry, telling of some hot corner where the rebels were making a stand. Occasionally a herd of baboons, frightened out of their haunts by the unusual disturbance, would troop along the tops of the mountain range with slow and deliberate tread. Then one would leave the herd, and making his way cautiously to a prominent boulder, proceed to climb up slantwise, and

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having gained the summit gravely squat down, and from this coign of vantage attempt to discover what all the noise was about. Ungainly, awkward, and sullen as these brutes are, it was a revelation to see them clamber up an almost vertical face of rock with the greatest assurance and ease; and the hill natives, who have them for an example, are not much behind them in agility.

"Once we fired some long-range shots at a rebel, but too far away to know whether they had taken effect. The noise of our shots brought up a small party from the laager, who thought we were being attacked. As the day wore on the firing got farther away, and we decided to have a prowl round amongst the rocks in our neighbourhood. Leaving one man at a post, we clambered down, and before we had gone thirty yards I noticed the colours of a blanket, deep down in a crevice of the rocks. A little farther on was an opening, with a sort of cave between the boulders. I followed it to the end, and there was the blanket jammed tightly in. On the ledge above were an assegai, battle-axe, and sandals. These I annexed, and was turning to go out, when a man behind me said, 'I'll have the blanket,' and started to pull at it. As he did so, up popped the head of a native, but before the latter could spring out Grant had him shot through the head. About a hundred yards farther on, beyond some large boulders, we came upon a number of boxes, travelling trunks, and tool-chests, all of which had been smashed open, and most of the contents taken. Lying around were a number of letters, Christmas and New Year cards (one of these had on it 'To dear mother, from Ethel'), work-boxes, axe-heads, picks, and shovels. The Cape Boys had evidently been through this lot of effects, which no doubt had originally been looted by the Matabele from stores and

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houses in the vicinity. Taking with us a few mementoes of the place, we returned to our post, where we remained till after dark. As we made our way down to the laager, the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep and goats gave welcome assurance of a big haul, and soon we were discussing the event of the day and hearing the latest news from those who had been fighting among the hills."

An incident—so far unrecorded—which might have had a disastrous termination, occurred at the laager early in the afternoon. Both the laager and the party left to defend it being small, a vigilant watch was kept, as at any moment a stray body of rebels, driven from the hills, might attempt a surprise attack. The Maxim, stationed in the most convenient position, was ready at short notice to be brought to bear on an enemy.

An hour or so after midday some figures of natives were observed advancing through the bushes. The officer in charge of the laager at once gave the order to stand by. On came the natives towards the wagons: further delay would be dangerous, and the order to fire was on the tip of the officer's tongue, when just, and only just, in time, he noticed that, instead of warriors, the approaching crowd was composed solely of women and children, with a detachment of our troops behind them.

Had the command to fire been given, it is horrible to contemplate what might have been the result.

With the Cape Boys.

The Cape Boys Corps, under Major Robertson, bore the brunt of the fighting at Thabas Amamba. Led by the gallant major, and the no less gallant Captain Nash, they stormed one stronghold after another, forcing the enemy from his position time after time, at the point of the

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bayonet. They literally ferreted the rebels out of the rocks, and the credit for the successful issue of the attack is largely due to them.

The following is an account, in his own words, of the doings of Major Robertson's Corps :—

"At Thabas Amamba my corps was detailed for escort to the guns. Early in the morning, seeing the enemy on the left flank of Plumer's march, on a few low kopjes, fifty men were directed to dislodge them.

"Before this was accomplished, an additional party was sent to some kopjes on the right flank, and, as Lieutenant Boggie's dismounted men were already engaged further to the front, Plumer directed the left wing of the Cape Boys to return. This they did, but somewhat reluctantly, as they were well in touch with the enemy. Here I sent Sergeant Blows and eight men to drive a few natives out of a small isolated kopje, which he managed to do in a most gallant manner, not only driving them out, but following them up and returning about two hours later from another direction with 400 cattle, forty sheep and goats, and twenty-five prisoners—men and women.

"Meanwhile, the guns having been in action some time on the stronghold, and a kopje on the right front of the guns having been stormed and taken by Boggie's dismounted men, assisted by my white division, the remainder were ordered to attack the main stronghold, and if possible to carry it by storm. Captain Ross was then directed to go round the northern base of the conical hill held by Boggie's men, with orders to rush across the open and endeavour to effect a lodgment on the stronghold. With Captain Nash and the remainder of the men I proceeded round the right of the hill, and under a very heavy fire we crossed an open sandy space, taking cover under

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TWO MEMBERS OF THE CAPE BOYS CORPS, M.R.F.

some large boulders lying at the base of the stronghold. This was carried out simultaneously with Ross's rush across the same waste under cover of the guns and the fire from the conical hill.

"As soon as the storming party made its appearance, a terrific fire was opened upon it, the enemy now firing in volleys, and though the bullets were seen plunging in the sand in hundreds between the men's feet, and in front and rear of them, strange to say not a single man was

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shot, and the desired shelter was reached without a casualty.

"Ross's party subsequently got about half-way up the stronghold when they were taken in rear as well as in front, and compelled to retire.

"Meanwhile, the right attack was more fortunate. Foot by foot we ascended the dangerous heights, taking advantage of every cover, nook, and crevice, now creeping along, now rushing across some opening between the rocks. The ascent was slowly but surely progressing.

"Arrived at an opening near the summit of the hill, we made a rush into it, and took the enemy by surprise. Here hand-to-hand struggles took place both in the open and in the caves where my men had pursued the rebels.

"One of the sergeants—Abrams—was wounded three times during the attack, but continued fighting on, whilst Trumpeter Krul received quite a score of wounds, having had a very severe time of it in amongst the caves. At one time we could see him and one of the rebels locked together and rolling over and over each other. Krul's fighting abilities, however, were greater than those of his opponent, who was finally run through with a bayonet. During this four and a half hours' fighting, there were several instances of bayonet *versus* assegai, the former in each case proving the superior weapon.

"Captain Nash assisted me most gallantly. I personally saw him shoot four rebels (one of them a chief) in quick succession with his revolver. It was not until the enemy had been cleared from the opening, and had taken shelter in the surrounding kopjes, that my men began to be picked off. Shots came from every conceivable direction, and I then had to select temporary shelter.

"At the entrance of each of the caves I posted two men

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with instructions to fire at any one approaching or attempting to escape. With the few men at my disposal I had the grass and dry reeds, of which the huts were composed, carried in armfuls, set alight, and dropped from above into the mouths of the caves. As the suffocating smoke penetrated into the recesses, there was a general rush of concealed rebels to escape, and no sooner did they appear, amidst the flames and smoke, than they were shot down. About 600 women and children were made prisoners; they were lodged in a place of safety during the fight, and were brought off at the finish. Before the smoking out of the caves was started, I sent one woman into each cave to tell the women and children who might be there to come out. This they at once did.

"At half-past two we vacated the place, with the exception of Sergeant Blows and four men, who were left to guard the entrance of the main cave, whilst we made good our return. After we had gone, it turned out that these five missed their way back, and instead of following us, went into a narrow valley running parallel with the one we had taken. There they were followed by about 150 rebels, who several times got within assegai throw, but were again and again driven off by the fire of Blows and his small party, who eventually arrived safely at laager.

"Colonel Plumer assembled the force under the western slope of the conical hill on the eastern side of the range, and marched homewards to laager with about 1,000 head of oxen, 2,200 goats and sheep, 400 women, and a multitude of children."

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THE ATTACK ON THABAS AMAMBA

WITH THE EUROPEAN SECTION OF THE DISMOUNTED MEN.

Contributed by CAPTAIN W. J. BOGGIE (*late Queensland Artillery*).

Special orders were issued by Colonel Plumer to the effect that the whole Column, together with thirty additional men from the Inyati Fort, would proceed by an all-night march in order to attack the enemy, who were reported by our spies to be occupying a strong and almost invincible position among the Thabas Amamba kopjes, at dawn next day.

All dismounted men were to start two hours in advance. At three o'clock in the afternoon these men—consisting of "C" Troop, a few men from "G" Troop, thirty men from the fort, under Lieutenant Banks-Wright, all men of the Bulawayo Field Force, together with about half a dozen volunteers from Bulawayo, the whole to be under my command, with the Johannesburg men under Major Robertson—were paraded before the Colonel for inspection. With a few parting words of advice and explanation, we were marched away at a good swinging stride, knowing that as we had about twenty-four miles to cover before dawn, there was no time to loiter by the way.

However, we did not think much of fatigue, as we knew it was just possible that the enemy, knowing we had left Inyati, might be coming to give us battle halfway, or perhaps be waiting in ambuscade in the forest, so we had to be constantly on the alert and to advance with caution.

Having tramped the distance of twelve miles in silence and darkness, the first six miles of which was through heavy sand, rendering our progress both difficult and tiresome, we arrived at Lungwe River, where a temporary

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halt was made in order to allow the mounted men to catch us up as arranged. From this place it was considered advisable to advance in full strength and with extra precaution.

In about an hour the mounted men arrived, and we resumed our march with Maxims in front and rear of the Column, and the mountain batteries in the centre; whilst strong detachments of mounted troopers formed advance and rear guards. Smoking or even talking above a whisper was prohibited, and, as a war correspondent wrote: "The only sound which broke an otherwise dead stillness was the tramp of men and horses, the rumbling of the Maxim gun carriages, and the occasional yelp of a jackal in the distance."

About 2 a.m. we observed the lights of the rebel advanced posts, and shortly afterwards we passed within two hundred yards of what appeared to be a long line of bivouac fires stretching about a mile along the outer face of the hills.

Every moment as we continued to advance, passing below the fires on our right, we expected to hear the whistling of bullets amongst us; but the enemy made no move, and it was indeed doubtful if they were aware of our proximity, although the noise of the gun carriages must have disturbed a few of them in their slumbers. In about an hour we passed along from south-west to north of the outposts, and were soon well on the north centre of the kopjes. About four miles further back, and towards the south, near to the place where we first saw the rebel outposts, we had left a strong force of mounted and dismounted men and a Maxim, the whole under command of Major Kershaw, with instructions that he was to attack from the south as soon as dawn appeared. We now all

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lay down in the form of a hollow square, the mounted men tying their horses to the trees, and quietly waited the approach of dawn, as the signal for the attack.

At the first indication that the stars in the eastern sky

CAPTAIN BOGGIE.

were failing before the greyish tinge of dawn, we all stood to arms. Each O.C. marched along his lines, and when "All present and correct," was reported, the mounted troops filed away to attack the enemy in the open, and give battle if challenged by an impi.

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Coats and jackets were discarded, sleeves were rolled up, belts tightened, rifles, revolvers and ammunition examined. In a few minutes all was in readiness, and the storming party silently advanced to the attack. Half an hour later, it was light enough to see all around, and immediately afterwards, as we entered a gorge in the hills, we became aware that the enemy had observed us, for the report of a rifle and the ping of a bullet over our heads, fired from the heights on our right, warned us that we were likely to meet with a warm reception. The shot, I think, was fired as a signal from one of the enemy's outlooks, to let the main body know that we had entered the defile, for immediately we could hear shouting on all sides, quickly followed by a dropping fire from about 400 yards' range on our right and left fronts. We contrived, however, to go forward steadily until we could see the enemy retreating before us, and independent firing from our men now commenced. The advance was steadily continued, and as the enemy's first lines were now within a hundred yards, we broke into a run and charged; the supporting line, under Major Robertson, joining forces with the first line under myself, together we rushed forward.

The enemy turned and fled, wheeling to the left, and through a beautiful shady grove, covered with fine tropical trees, pursued and pursuers dashed pell-mell in open order, our men loading and firing as they ran, the enemy endeavouring to stop the rush by occasionally turning round and firing, then dashing off faster than before. We could see the Matabele leaders urging their men to stand, and shouting to them to turn and charge us with their assegais, but without effect, for I suppose the appearance of the white impi was too terrible, and no persuasion would induce even the bravest of the Matabele warriors to stand

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more than a second or two, and face that avenging line bearing swiftly down in pursuit. Smoke and flame and a continuous rattle of rifles heralded its approach. My men were now warming to their work, and dashed on in eager haste. Dogs barked and howled, and sped madly in all directions, often biting the dust in the agony of a bullet intended for their masters. Women shrieked and clapped their hands while calling loudly on "M'limo" for protection and victory. Children yelled as mothers jostled them in their hasty flight. The cattle in their kraals kept up a continuous low moaning, even the goats and sheep joined with shrill, plaintive cries in the general medley of sounds. Heard above all the commotion was the booming of the mountain batteries, the hissing flight of the projectiles overhead, followed by loud reports, echoing again and again, as the shrapnel bullets sped to their destined marks. Still the chase went on.

The enemy at last gained the shelter of their caves and rocky crevices, and as we approached saluted us with a withering fire from almost invisible cracks or apertures, thus compelling my men to take instant cover. At this stage of the engagement, the firing line, owing to the configuration of the ground, was split up into sections resulting in a series of independent fights more or less severe as chance happened to direct. For about half an hour our northern flank continued to fight on the principle adopted by the enemy, *i.e.* firing from behind cover, and shooting whenever a chance opportunity occurred.

The enemy, who had suffered severely through the well-directed fire of the mountain batteries, now directed their attention to the guns, and a number of well-aimed shots came dropping among the gunners, who, however, taking advantage as much as possible of the cover afforded by the

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wheels, continued to ply their guns. Colonel Plumer, now seeing that the supreme moment for attack had arrived, ordered the north wing of the firing line to support the guns preparatory to storming the enemy's first position, from which place the rebels were concentrating a heavier fire than ever on the guns. To reach the mountain battery, which was occupying an elevated position on our right rear, a retrograde movement had to be made by part of the firing line, and in execution of the manœuvre every man was for a few seconds exposed to the enemy's fire; for, whenever we came out of our shelter, a terrific volley tore through our ranks. Nevertheless, strange to relate, not a man was hit, although the bullets whistled past our ears, and embedded themselves in the earth at our feet.

By successive rushes, every man moving independently, and dodging from cover to cover, the fire-swept zone was crossed and the attacking party reached at the guns. A few minutes' breathing time, a brief command, a rapid formation, and the stormers dashed for first position—a conical-shaped rocky kopje about 200 yards distant.

Ordered to lead the storming party, I placed myself in the centre at front of the line, giving the "right wing" to Lieutenant Hunt, and the "left" to Sergeant-Major Brooker. At a distance of about fifty yards from the kopje, I gave a signal for the usual cheer, which was at once responded to by all the line. Whether it could be called a British cheer, I did not know; but the loud rolling and hearty cheer heard on the football and cricket fields appeared to have given place to a sort of war whoop, and for a second or so a deep, revengeful yell echoed from the granite rocks on our front.

A moment later, and we were in hand-to-hand conflict with our dusky foes. The engagement was brief and

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decisive. A succession of rapid reports, a pattering and singing of bullets, a cracking of revolvers, a brief impression of blood-bespattered rocks, wounded, dying and dead warriors, and the position was carried. We were on the top, with the enemy speeding down the far side, and running across the intervening gorge or valley in order to gain the shelter of the second position. As they were clearing the open ground, we lined the ridge, and by independent firing avenged tenfold the deaths of our comrades, who now were lying grey and stiff on the crimson slopes.

As we were recovering our wind after the assault, the second stronghold was attacked by the Johannesburg men under Major Robertson, and I was able from my position to cover his advance by a heavy fire, until his men were about twenty yards off the rocks, when of course I had to sound "Cease fire," lest by chance we should hit friends instead of foes. Immediately my men ceased firing, I heard the charging cheer, and saw the Cape Boys with their orange-coloured pugarees and swarthy faces clear the intervening space with leaps and bounds, and in a briefer space than it takes to tell, they throw themselves upon the Matabele. The fight was between savage negro and semi-civilised half-caste. The intrepid Matabele warriors met the rush with superb bravery, while the Cape Boys dashed forward with reckless indifference to the storm of bullets, assegais, and battle-axes which they encountered.

The enemy here made a long and desperate stand, fighting to the last with stubborn determination; but gradually and surely they were driven backwards, losing position after position until the gallant Cape Boys gained the summit. A good many, however, never descended

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from out the shade of these bullet-riddled rocks, caves, and trees.

By two o'clock in the afternoon the enemy had been forced out of their strongest positions, and as it was impossible for the tired-out men to continue searching for the hiding-places of the now thoroughly demoralised rebels, the "assembly" was sounded, and after a brief halt we gave the "soldier's burial" to those of our comrades who had fallen. We buried the remains of brave Trooper O'Reilly almost on the spot where he had received his death-wound. Rough stretchers for the wounded were made, and they were carefully borne away from the field where they had fought so well.

As nearly all the fighting in this engagement fell to the lot of the dismounted men, there were only about 250 men in the actual engagement. We returned to camp with a loss of twenty-five men killed and wounded, rather a heavy percentage when compared with other battles in this country. The actual number killed on the enemy's side was probably slightly under 200, but quite another 200 were most likely wounded. I consider that the enemy numbered between 1,500 and 2,000 armed men.

With Taylor's Scouts.

The following is an account of the attack as seen by one of Taylor's Scouts:—

"The march from Inyati to Thabas Amamba occupied about five hours, for we travelled at a walk the whole distance. It must have been nearly midnight when we approached the stronghold. The rebel fires could be seen within two hundred yards, and even the figures of the natives moving amongst them, as we skirted round the base of the hills. About a quarter of a mile be-

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yond a halt was called, when we lay down in the long grass for a few hours' sleep. Before daybreak horses were saddled, and riding ahead of the Column, we followed the line of hills eastward until we came to an opening in the bush to the kopje immediately in front of us. Here Captain Coope took his men off to the left whilst Lieutenant 'Bulala' Taylor went away with us to the right. After watering the horses, we came across some cattle spoor, and shortly afterwards Lieutenant Taylor spied a native running up the side of a kopje. He had been surprised in one of the scherms and was heading off. Taylor at once put up his rifle and fired the first shot of the day but without drawing first blood. Further on again we caught sight of a small party of natives running up a kopje, and again we opened fire upon them. As they reached the top, one of our shots took effect on the last man, bringing him down. Taking cover behind some rocks the others commenced firing back. Just then, one of them rushed out to drag the body of the wounded man under cover. As he was doing so, a well-directed shot from one of our rifles struck him full in the head. We killed two more of them, and the remainder dispersed.

"From there we made straight towards the centre of the hills. Beyond seeing a number of the enemy's scherms, which it was evident, from the lighted fires and articles lying about, they had recently deserted, we failed to discover their whereabouts, and after riding in and out among the kopjes, a *détour* was made to the open country north of the place where we had first met the enemy. On the way out we noticed a few cattle in a scherm built of stones under a small kopje. When we got on the flats we met Captain Bowden and 'A' Squadron, who had with them a large number of cattle captured from the rebels.

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Taylor expressed his intention of going back for the cattle seen in the scherm. In order to effect this as quickly as possible, instead of returning by the route we had just traversed, Taylor decided to take a short cut through a narrow defile between two kopjes. Bowden suggested it was not a desirable place to be in with a body of mounted men, but Taylor pooh-poohed the idea and we rode on, Bowden meanwhile going round to the left with his men. There were about a dozen of us, and the nature of the place necessitated our riding in single file. When about half our number had entered the gorge, the rebels opened fire at short range, and almost immediately the word was passed that Langton was hit. Taylor, seeing the pass was impracticable, at once gave the order to retire, which however was no easy matter. Most of us dismounted, some running to assist Langton, whilst the rest had their hands full, leading the horses and carrying the spare rifles. Langton, who was shot through both legs, died as he was being carried out of the pass. He simply bled to death, the bullet having severed both of the femoral arteries. Du Preez, while in the act of carrying the wounded man, was himself shot through the leg, and had in turn to be carried away. All this was under heavy fire. Captain Bowden, on hearing the shots, returned at a gallop, and lining his men up in the open, covered the retreat of the Scouts with his rifles. During the engagement Trooper Hill was shot twice through the body. He lived to be taken into camp, but succumbed to his injuries, poor fellow, the same night. Corporal Bedford and Troopers Mayor and Steel were slightly wounded about the same time, whilst a number of others had some remarkably narrow escapes. Three of our horses were shot. Corporal Jardine had no less than four bullet-holes through his clothes, but

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came away unhurt. It is a matter for regret that the rebel who succeeded in killing Langton and wounding Du Preez was not himself shot. Taylor caught sight of him once, but not in time to draw a bead on him before he bobbed down behind a rock. He was dressed in a suit of khaki, and was not a Matabele. Taylor gave it as his opinion that he was a Basuto, fighting with the rebels. The fact of semi-civilised natives living amongst the Matabele gave rise to the rumour that the rebels were led by white men,

MATABELE SMITH AND FORGE.

The iron is beaten out into thin strips by the native smith. Two of these cut to the required length are then welded together; the parts overlapping are hammered down just sufficiently to leave a narrow groove along the blade on either side and to cause the edges of the weapon to be on slightly different planes. Assegais so fashioned inflict an ugly wound, and are quite as effective as the better-finished, English-made article, a number of which were found bearing the name of Marples Brothers.

but this has since been proved to be entirely without foundation and quite unworthy of credence. I had stayed behind, doing what I could to stanch Hill's wounds, when I suddenly discovered that the remainder of the Scouts had disappeared. Accordingly I attached myself to the

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first party that came along, with whom was Mr. Rhodes. I suppose there were thirty-five or forty of us, all told. In the course of what may be called a rambling reconnaissance we found ourselves riding through a sort of pass, leading into a semicircular valley. It was a nasty place, being very rocky, and as we passed close under a kopje to our left, a native was seen up amongst the rocks, and some of the party commenced firing at him. I was riding by the side of Mr. Rhodes, and happening to look up saw another rebel aiming point-blank at us from above. I quickly warned Mr. Rhodes. At the same moment the native fired, the bullet striking the ground right under the body of Mr. Rhodes' horse. Mr. Rhodes was by no means disconcerted, but expressed his opinion forcibly on the folly of taking a party of men into such a palpable trap. The order 'Files about' was given, and we lost no time in getting out of it. Commenting on his narrow escape, Mr. Rhodes merely remarked: 'If I had been shot through the leg, I should have been very much annoyed; in fact, very angry.'

"As at other times during the Campaign, Mr. Rhodes coolly rode about under fire without any regard to risk or danger, and utterly oblivious to his own personal danger. Little did the rebel marksman know what issues were at stake, as he levelled his gun at the great statesman and financier. It is said in this connection that a well-known Press representative followed close on the heels of Mr. Rhodes throughout the day, his intention being, should that gentleman be shot, to ride post-haste to Bulawayo, after the fashion of the famous Rothschild's Waterloo messenger, and operate on the market by virtue of information of which, for some time at least, he would be the sole possessor in touch with the wires. Shortly after two o'clock the 'Assembly' was sounded, and the

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day's fighting being over, the troops, with the wounded, the captured cattle, and the women and children, started off for camp. The march home was very tedious, for the wounded had to be conveyed on improvised stretchers. There were plenty of willing hands for this laborious duty, and the distance being long, frequent relays of bearers were necessary. Officers and men alike cheerfully volunteered to take their turn at carrying the wounded. After a long and weary march, we reached camp shortly after sundown."

Not the least conspicuous feature of the battle of Thabas Amamba was the enormous quantity of loot which the rebels had collected in the course of their raids on the white settlers. At one place no less than six wagons and carts were discovered, used by them to convey the plunder to the stronghold.

Stored away in caves were bales of blankets, clothing, mining materials, provisions of all sorts; in fact, most of the articles one would expect to find in an up-country store. These, of course, were re-annexed and brought into town on the wagons of the Column. The individual finds were many and curious. Knowing that the Matabele, regarding their position as impregnable, had hidden away most of the valuable effects taken from the white people, all who had the opportunity made a keen search in nooks, crevices, and under thatches. In many instances it was not fruitless. One man came on a bundle of half-notes representing £1,500. They were not worth a cent however to him, as being incomplete, they were unnegotiable. Another man found £28 in notes and gold, and in another instance a considerable sum of money in silver was secured. Amongst other articles discovered were a wedding dress

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a tennis racquet, a pair of dancing pumps, a Wanderers' Club (Johannesburg) medal, a number of medallions of different religious societies (no doubt taken by the rebels from Mission Stations), clasp and carving knives, an officer's sword, Lee-Metford and other rifles, elephant guns, and hundreds of minor trifles too numerous to specify.

The Cape Boys were very eager to possess themselves of loot, and ran a great deal of unnecessary risk in so doing. Absolutely regardless of danger, and careless of the fact that rebels with firearms were lurking among the rocks in all directions, they went peering into caves, collecting anything of value that came in their way, and generally having a good time. Several of them paid for their recklessness with their lives. The writer saw a number of them with bundles slung on both ends of their rifles sauntering about in the most unconcerned manner.

The battle of Thabas Amamba was fought on a Sunday. It is a curious coincidence that the first lesson appointed to be read in churches at Morning Service of that day should happen to be 1 Samuel v. 15 to *v.* 24, which describes Saul's expedition against Agag and the Amalekites, together with a big capture of sheep and oxen.

Had Colonel Plumer been an Ironside of Cromwell's time, there is but little doubt that the parallel features would have been regarded as an auspicious omen. At the present time, however, the suggestion that the gallant Colonel was a sort of modern "Hew-Agag-in-pieces" at Thabas Amamba might not meet with his approval.

There is a wide divergence of opinion as to the number of rebels killed, the estimate ranging between two and five hundred. The former is probably nearer the mark.

Early the following morning the bodies of Hill and Pringle were laid to rest with military honours, Father

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Barthélemy, the priest who accompanied the Column, reading the burial service. Their graves are almost under the shadow of the mountain stronghold, the taking of which cost them their lives.

Corporal Pringle, it may be mentioned, fell mortally wounded just prior to Major Robertson's attack on the stronghold. Both his death and that of Hill, caused the deepest feelings of regret amongst their comrades of the M.R.F.

The following incident connected with Pringle's death was related by an eye-witness. As he was about to breathe his last, the good Father, solicitous for the welfare of the poor fellow's soul, approached and bent over the dying man. Pringle's friend who was attending him, bluntly inquired what the priest wanted. Hearing him mention something about sins, he replied, "Sins! He hasn't got any. He's as good a man as you are. I never heard him say 'Damn' in his life." A unique tribute from one who had known him for many years, and which with equal justice could be applied to very few troopers—proverbially men of "strange oaths."

Shortly after the funeral the troops were drawn up into three sides of a square, and Colonel Plumer addressed the Force. He complimented all on the success of the night march, and the steadiness and silence in which it had been carried out, and expressed himself highly satisfied with the result of the attack. He said they had fought the Matabele rebels in their own stronghold, and had completely demoralised them by capturing their cattle, women, and children. He referred to the many individual acts of gallantry and heroism, and singled out Major Robertson's Cape Boys as worthy of special mention for the prominent part they had taken in the fight.

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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PLUMER.

A detachment of mounted men under Captain Drury proceeded early in the day to where Langton's body had been left. Except for two stabs from an assegai through the region of the heart, it had not been mutilated. A grave

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was dug within 150 yards of the place where he fell, and his remains were buried in the presence of his late comrades the Scouts, who formed his firing party, the short burial service being read by Captain Drury.

All the kopjes around the stronghold were carefully searched, but there remained no sign of the rebels, who had deserted the place in a body during the night. By the spoor it could be seen that a number had escaped northwards, in the direction of the Shangani, whilst the remainder had no doubt made off towards the Matoppo Hills.

On Tuesday, July 7th, the Column started on the back trek, which was principally remarkable for the mortality amongst the horses. Many of the poor brutes were in terribly low condition, owing to the scarcity of forage, and not a few simply died of starvation. As a consequence, there were quite a number of erstwhile mounted men who had to "foot-slog" the whole journey back.

Colonel Plumer, with true soldierly instinct, set the example to his men thus deprived of their horses, by trudging on in front of them day after day. This self-imposed fatigue on the part of their commanding officer, and the spirit which dictated it, were highly appreciated by the men, who hardly felt disposed to grumble at the inevitable when it was so cheerfully met on equal terms by their leader.

The fifth day saw us back again at the Welsh Harp on the Umguza River, and here the members of the Bulawayo Field Force left the Column and marched into town, where the Corps was disbanded.

Orders were now received for the Column to proceed at once to Usher's No. 1 Farm, twelve miles south of Bulawayo, to commence operations in the Matoppo Hills.

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Accordingly, on the 13th July the Column trekked to that place. What then appeared to be a permanent camp was formed, and there it remained for five days.

Major-General Carrington arrived in camp on the 17th, assumed personal command of the operations on the following day, and camp was moved five miles further south, to a site in the Malema Valley, known as Usher's No. 2, at the very foot of the hills.

From this time forward the combined force was designated the Matoppo Column.

A COSSACK POST.

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SECTION IV

THE MATOPPOS

CHAPTER I

Attack on Babayana's Stronghold

Description of the Matoppos—General Carrington in Command—A Night March—The N'Kantola Stronghold—Cape Boys to the Front – Native Tactics.

THE MATOPPOS.

THE range of mountains known as the Matoppo Hills consists of a series of mountain and hill groups extending in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction for about 120 miles, with an average breadth of about 25 miles. The northern base of the Matoppos is, at its nearest point, 15 miles south-east of Bulawayo. These mountain and hill groups enclose hundreds of narrow and very fertile valleys, and the whole system is intersected by numerous watercourses and rivers, those to the South and East flowing into the Tuli, Umzingwane, and Lundi, all tributaries of the Limpopo or Crocodile River, whilst the northern slope is drained by the tributaries of the Gwai (such as the Umguza, Shangani, and Bembezi), which, in its turn, flows into the Zambezi.

Most of the valleys are approached through very narrow defiles, only practicable for baggage and pack animals, and

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are, as a rule, connected with each other by a network of mountain passes, narrow gorges, and clefts in the hills. Ascending from the valleys on the various mountain slopes are tiers upon tiers of gigantic granite boulders, rising frequently to a height of from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. These huge blocks, thrown together as it were carelessly by the forces of nature, piled upon and leaning against each other at all angles, form hundreds and thousands of natural caves of all conceivable shapes and dimensions. In the crevices and openings between the boulders, a dense growth of stunted bush and thorny creepers have twined themselves into almost impenetrable entanglement, through which narrow winding footpaths have been made by the natives, leading from cave to cave, from base to summit of the hills.

It is in these mountain fastnesses that the Matabele always have their strongholds. Another kind of mountain slope, frequently met with in the Matoppos, is that in which the smooth rock rises upwards without a vestige of vegetation on its surface—just a wall of bare granite, ascending for hundreds of feet at an angle but few degrees from the perpendicular, and then gradually rounding off gently until the broad flat top is reached. It is along these elevated plateaux that the Matabele have their high roads from stronghold to stronghold. The valleys are all splendidly watered, even after a long drought, and numerous patches of marsh and bog are met with where the fall of the ground is hardly perceptible. In these valleys of the Matoppos alone there is ample ground for the growing of sufficient crops to supply the whole Matabele race with pasture, enough and to spare for the raising and feeding any number of cattle, sheep, and goats. Game of every description is plentiful, thus affording an additional

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The Nkantola.

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source of food and clothing to the natives, for they are experts in the art of trapping.

It may be stated without fear of contradiction that by far the greater part of the country on "the under side" of the Matoppos to the South and East, is to all intents and purposes *terra incognita*, into which very few white men have as yet penetrated.

THE ATTACK ON BABAYANA'S STRONGHOLD.

On the night of Sunday, July 19th, at about 9.30 p.m., the Column, under the personal command of Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington, marched out of the Base Camp into the hills, for the purpose of attacking a stronghold known as the "N'Kantola," [1] held by the notorious Babayana, who, secure in his position, was said to be breathing defiance against the white impi.

This stronghold was ten miles distant from the Base Camp, and the presence of the Matabele in force there had been determined by reconnaissances made previously by Colonel Baden Powell and Major Kershaw.

A night march with an attack at dawn was decided upon, and as the preparations for these were being made, every one felt assured in his own mind that Babayana and his followers were going to have a bad time within the next twelve hours. After sundown all was bustle and activity. The thoughts of an exciting morrow seemed to endue each individual of the force with fresh life and ardour. With the memory of the enemy's discomfiture at Thabas Amamba just two weeks earlier, few there were who had any doubts as to the issue of the next day's attack. The Cape Boys waxed enthusiastic on their lines,

[1] Matabele corruption of the Dutch word "Kantoor" (place of business).

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shouting and singing in gleeful anticipation of once more being within fighting distance of the rebel warriors. As the evening wore on discipline prevailed, officers and non-coms. were busy getting everything in trim for the march, and later, those of the men who had made such provision as was necessary, lay down for a brief rest before starting with the Column at the appointed hour.

Markers having been posted at proper intervals, the troops, on receiving the word from the Adjutant, filed off to their allotted positions, the following order of march being observed: First of all the Scouts, supported by native "friendlies" on either flank; then the Matabeleland Mounted Police, on this occasion dismounted; A and B Squadrons, M.R.F., supported by the Cape Boys Corps on the left and Colenbrander's Native Contingent on the right; Maxim guns and Hotchkiss of the M.M.P.; Mountain Battery, R.A.; Maxim, M.R.F.; Lieutenant Mathias' troop; and E Squadron, M.R.F.

After marching for about two hours, a halt was called on the top of a gently sloping ridge. Here a large square was formed, and guards having been posted, each man wrapped himself up in his overcoat, and lying down at the spot where he had been halted, attempted to get a little sleep. Not many were successful, as the air was keen and searching. All were glad enough when, after four hours' shivering on the bare ground, the order to advance was given. While the stars were yet twinkling, the Column moved off in silence. Leaving the hospital wagon at the entrance of a valley under guard of a Maxim, great-coats were thrown off and we set out in light marching order for our destination, now only about three miles distant.

As the day dawned we found ourselves tramping over

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grass veldt and now and then garden lands, with tall grey kopjes rising up to right and left. An hour or so later, as the first streaks of sunlight glinted on the mountain tops, the Column was halted. Through an opening in the hills a valley could be seen extending away to the left front, whilst on the opposite side the rugged walls of the stronghold could be clearly discerned.

The Mountain Battery was now ordered up to commence operations; in a remarkably short space of time the guns were ready in position, and as the challenge boomed forth, a ring-shell sped on its errand towards the rebel position.

Shot after shot was fired in quick succession. Under cover of these shots Colenbrander's Boys and the detachment of "friendlies" advanced in extended order, Captain Coope's Scouts moving off to the right front down a narrow valley. The enemy could be seen in great numbers clearing from the flat ground and running to the cover of the rocks, behind which they disappeared.

About this time—7 o'clock a.m.—the distant boom of a gun was heard away amongst the hills to our right, followed by volley firing, intimating plainly that Captain Laing, who was to effect a junction with Carrington's force, was heavily engaged.

This firing, so far as we could judge, ceased about 11 a.m., and nothing further was heard that day of Laing's Column. Meanwhile, Colenbrander's Boys and the "friendlies" had succeeded in driving the enemy out of a kraal, which they promptly set fire to. At this time the firing from the portion of the stronghold overlooking the kraal becoming very heavy, the Cape Boys, 160 strong, under Major Robertson, were moved into the left-hand valley to support them, and in a few minutes they were

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in the thick of the fray. Captain Nash, with 40 men, stormed and took the heights above the kraal, another party, under Colonel Serjeant (5th Rifle Brigade), at the same time attacking and forcing the position on his left flank.

In this engagement the "friendlies" completely lost their heads and fired their rifles off wildly as fast as they could load without any definite object. They were a useless rabble, as well as a considerable source of danger to those near them.

The attack of Robertson's Cape Boys succeeded at all points. The rebels, after a short and sharp resistance, broke and fled to seek cover elsewhere, as they were successively dislodged from three different positions. By this time a Hotchkiss and two Maxims, under command of Captain Llewellyn (late R.N.), were brought into action, and opened fire from the valley. Under cover of these the enemy was driven out of his scherms and fled over the kopjes to the South. With the exception of the Scouts, the remainder of the white troops were held in reserve, and were simply spectators of the fight from the surrounding heights. The loss on our side consisted of three Cape Boys killed and four severely wounded, besides a number of "friendlies" wounded. The only white man shot was Sergeant F. C. Worringham, who was attached to the Scouts. He received a bullet in the upper part of the body whilst riding along the valley, and was carried nearly the whole length of the valley by his fellow Scouts, who were continuously fired on from the heights as they bore their wounded comrade off the field. A glance showed he was past medical aid. He was able to speak with difficulty, and suffered a good deal, and knew, poor fellow, as he said, that they had "managed to do for

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The Nkantola (Babayana's Stronghold).

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him." He was carried shoulder high on the homeward journey to the ambulance wagon, but died in about half an hour after reaching it. Worringham was buried next morning with the customary military honours, the site of the grave being near the main road. Worringham was a man of considerable experience in the country, and had acted as interpreter to the late Lord Randolph Churchill during his visit to Rhodesia. The wounded during the fighting were brought on stretchers from the base of the stronghold up to a spot where the troops were halted amongst the bushes on an eminence overlooking the main valley. Drs. Michell and Sutcliffe each amputated a Cape Boy's leg on the field, whilst Dr. Lunan followed close on the heels of Major Robertson during the storming of the stronghold, and rendered temporary aid to the wounded as they fell. Forty "friendlies" were told off as stretcher-bearers; but as soon as the first shots were fired, at least two-thirds of them incontinently decamped.

There are very conflicting accounts as to the number of the enemy who were killed during the attack. Some exaggerate their loss into hundreds, whilst the rebels themselves since give the equally ridiculous return of barely a dozen.

During an engagement of this sort, which practically amounts to a game of hide-and-seek among the rocks, it is a difficult matter to arrive at a correct estimate of the damage done to the enemy. The general tendency is to uncurb the imagination and give wild possibilities the semblance of actual facts. Out in the open, when a compact body of natives is exposed to the withering fire of a Maxim at short range, the case is entirely different. The dead and wounded are left where they drop, and an accurate idea of their loss is at once obtainable. But

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where all the shooting is from behind rocks, the same ground being perhaps passed over again and again, it is reasonable to suppose, in the heat and excitement of battle, that any conclusion arrived at is pure conjecture. There is a vast difference between 10 and 200, even where the lives of Matabele rebels are concerned; and any statements in this connection, depending on the addition or the omission of one cipher, must be accepted with a certain amount of reserve.

It is somewhat humiliating to believe that we, fully equipped with all the arms and munitions of modern warfare, should be able only to exact life for life when pitted against a horde of naked savages. When, however, one considers the tremendous advantages they possessed in their intimate knowledge of the locality, the ease and rapidity with which they could dodge over the slippery surface of the rocks or conceal themselves in the caves, the very existence of which would be unsuspected from without, one inclines to a more moderate estimate of their actual loss.

General Carrington, on seeing the nature of the rebel stronghold, expressed the opinion that it was far worse than Secocoeni's or Malaboch's Mountains in the Transvaal, in which latter place the natives held out for so long a time against the Dutch.

With the experience of the day's fight, it became evident that to "'unt the 'eathen out" was going to be no easy matter after all. That self-same "'eathen" had commenced to learn a thing or two, and showed every sign of putting his knowledge to practical use. The Matabele is no fool; his preconceived notions of how to fight the white man have long since been discarded. He knows now that it is a bad thing for his health to face the fire of

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the "isi-kwa-kwa" (Maxim) in the open, that advances in skirmishing order and volley firing are better tactics; and that a man behind a rock, with a good supply of cartridges, can make things very lively for an enemy in the open. He no longer believes that the higher he pushes the sight of his rifle, the harder will be the impact of the bullet; and he is at last alive to the fact that it is more effective to shoot down the gunners, than to blaze away at the on-coming "by-and-bye" (shell).

At Thabas Amamba, an officer called out to his men, as they were about to fire a volley into a kopje lined with rebels, "Now then, boys, fire low." "Dubulani pansi lani." ("You fire low too") was distinctly heard in Matabele from the kopje, as the native chief, profiting by the order, gave similar instructions to his followers.

In the meanwhile, and whilst we were engaging the rebels at Babayana's stronghold, Captain Laing, in the endeavour to follow out his instructions and co-operate with Carrington's Force, was having a very hot time indeed in the neighbourhood of Inungu Mountain.

The following details the writer gathered from one who was there, and who at the time thought it highly improbable that he would ever again be anywhere else.

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CHAPTER II.

Laing's Fight in Inungu Gorge

Laing ordered to Co-operate with Main Column—A Death-Trap—"Laing's Graveyard"—Rebels Surprise Laager—Plucky Resistance—The Column Proceeds into the Hills—An Opportune Retreat.

A COLUMN under Captain T. Laing, consisting of 170 officers, non-commissioned officers and men, together with 300 "friendlies," a Nordenfeldt, a seven-pounder, and a Maxim, marched from Figtree on the 19th July, with instructions to proceed into the hills from the North-West and effect a junction with Carrington's Force at or near the N'Kantola on the following day.

Passing by Mapisa's Kraal and "Chawner's Camp," this Force entered the hills on the afternoon of the 19th. After crossing the valley through which run the Malongwe and Malema Rivers, the Column, leaving Inungu Mountain to the right, advanced for about a mile up a narrow gorge. As it was then sundown, Laing decided to laager up for the night, and chose a spot now known by the melancholy title of "Laing's Graveyard."

A brief description of the gorge is necessary. After entering it from what is comparatively open country, the pass leads through a belt of thick bush, composed of small trees; on either side, at a distance of fifty or sixty yards, the walls of the kopjes rise abruptly, forming a defile which for defensive purposes could not well be improved

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upon; but from the point of view of attack it is best characterised as "a nasty place." Cover of the best kind is afforded by thick stunted bush and huge boulders, amongst which a large body of natives might be concealed without their presecne being suspected. Just before arriving at the "Graveyard" the valley widens out considerably, and a little further along on the right, in a semi-circular opening in the rocks, is the spot which this plucky but somewhat indiscreet officer selected on which to bivouac his troops for the night. Had the intention been to invite an attack on the laager, the spot was well chosen. What followed was only in the natural order of things to be expected. The movements of the Column no doubt had been carefully watched by the rebels on the heights from the time the hills were entered. But even they must have been somewhat surprised at the confiding tactics of the white men.

During the night the guard reported seeing natives prowling about the rocks. At daybreak the rebels, who had evidently collected in force during the night hours, opened fire on the laager from two sides.

The effect of the first shots, as they rattled out in the morning silence, was electrical. Each man dashed for his rifle, and throwing himself down flat on the ground behind his saddle, commenced to load and fire for dear life. In the dim uncertain light of dawn it was difficult to distinguish the enemy, the flashes from their rifles being the sole guide. But only for a moment or two. As the laager replied to the challenge with a brisk fusillade, down rushed the rebels from the heights, bent on carrying everything before them in one bold charge. So fierce and determined was the onslaught, that several of the foremost actually succeeded in sweeping up to within a pace or two

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of the rifles. At this critical moment the two machine guns (Maxim and Nordenfeldt) and the seven-pounder (with case) poured a withering fire into the advancing warriors, checking their progress and forcing them to retire in haste and disorder under cover of the rocks. Simultaneously the enemy attacked the "friendlies," who were encamped to the right of the laager about fifty yards away. These latter, utterly demoralised by the suddenness of the attack, made a rush pell-mell for the laager; and in so doing crossed the line of fire from the rifles, with the result that before Laing could give the order to cease firing, about thirty of them were shot down by his own men.

While this was going on, the rebels climbed the kopjes immediately above the laager, and started firing down, being able to get under cover of the rocks within twenty or thirty yards of the line of saddles. One of them from behind a large slab-sided boulder, barely eighteen yards from the laager, kept up a continuous fire with deadly effect, and before he was dislodged succeeded in killing and wounding a number of men. The rock and a tree growing immediately behind it were literally covered with bullet marks. Corporal John Hall, Belingwe Field Force, and Troopers W. H. Bush and P. Bennett, both of E Troop of M.M.P., were killed on the spot, all being shot through the head. Their remains were subsequently buried about seven miles away from the scene of the fight. Ten troopers were wounded more or less seriously; amongst them being Trooper O. C. Morgan, who died three days later.

Narrow escapes were many and frequent, a number of men having their hats and clothing pierced by bullets. No less than eleven horses were left dead on the field.

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Site of "Laing's Graveyard," showing bodies of horses killed during the fight on July 20th.

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A COIGN OF VANTAGE.

Trooper Bennett, on picket duty during the night, was fired on at his post when the attack first commenced. He managed to reach laager in safety, but had barely got within the lines when he met with his death. Some of the saddles from behind which the men fired as they lay down were riddled with bullet holes.

However much Laing was deficient in foresight and discrimination, he showed no lack of ability in conducting the defence. Under the heavy fire of the enemy he coolly walked about giving directions to the men, and his calm bravery helped to inspire them with confidence at the time they most needed it. But whilst admiring his courage, it cannot be forgotten that by the exercise of ordinary common sense the disaster might easily have been averted, and valuable lives saved—a reflection which is accentuated by the fact that he was remonstrated with by others on the danger and risk of laagering up where he did. Those who were in the engagement, which lasted for an hour, are by no means anxious to go through a similar experience, and consider their escape with their lives as little short of miraculous.

The rebel chiefs who attacked Laing were Mabiza, Inkonkebella, Holi, and Dhliso. The last-named came up with part of his impi as a reinforcement during the night.

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At eleven o'clock on the same day the Column advanced about two miles further along the valley, and laagered up in the open, where the wounded were attended to by Dr. Anderson, who behaved most admirably throughout the fight. That afternoon and early the following day the march through the hills was continued; but finding that the valleys trended away to the South, and that there was no passage practicable in the desired direction, Laing decided to retire.

FIRING FROM COVER.

The Column arrived back at Chawner's Camp outside the hills in two "treks," where they were met by a relief party under Captain Beresford, with ambulance wagons from Plumer's Column, and all marched together into the Base Camp at Usher's.

The natives who fought Laing have since stated that had he gone on, instead of returning when he did, they had made preparations to block up the two ends of the gorge into which the Column would have passed, and so to cut it up. As it was, a large impi followed close on the

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heels of Laing as he retired, and purposed making another attack in the Inungu Gorge; but they were too late for this, as they only came up just in time to see the last of his wagons leave the gorge, and they were much too wary to chance an attack in the open veldt.

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CHAPTER III

Nicholson's Attack at Inungu

Through Rocky Defiles—Rebels' Effective Fire—Casualties—A Hasty Retreat—Sufferings of Wounded—A Sum in Arithmetic—From a Trooper's Standpoint—Uses of the Press.

ON the night of July 24th, Captain Nicholson (7th Hussars), Commandant of the M.M.P., with 250 mounted men, 200 Colenbrander's Cape Boys, two field-guns and two Maxims, left the Base Camp for the scene of Laing's fight at Inungu. The particular object of the visit was no doubt to teach the rebels in that neighbourhood a lesson, but it was found they were not as amenable to instruction as they might have been.

Camping that night in the open, just opposite to the present site of Inungu Fort, the Column marched into the hills at daybreak, following along the selfsame road taken by Laing a few days before. After slow travelling for about four miles through some of the roughest country imaginable, the wagons bumping over the boulder-strewn track, narrowly escaping capsizes as they were dragged, pushed, and steadied across the steep water-worn sides of mountain ravines, we debouched into a large circular valley and laagered up in the clear.

Without delay the troops were advanced in skirmishing order across the open valley for the purpose of attacking the kopjes on either side of the Inungu Gorge. As these

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Scene of Captain Nicholson's Fight (showing the Entrance to the gorge on the left).

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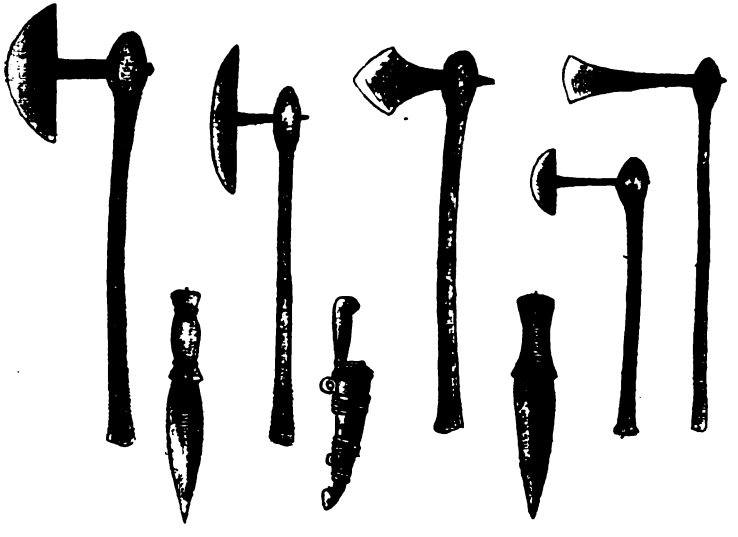
were approached, the presence of the enemy was soon manifested by shots from the heights of the position. The artillery—the Hotchkiss and a Maxim—were quickly run up to the mouth of the gorge, to cover the advance of the European squadron as they defiled up the pass under shelter of the trees. Scarcely had they entered than they were exposed to a raking cross-fire from an invisible foe. So well directed and constant was it that within a few minutes four of our men were shot down. One of these,



BATTLE-AXES AND KNIVES TAKEN FROM THE NATIVES DURING THE WAR.

Heathfield, had an extraordinary escape. As he was turning his body in the act of taking a cartridge from his bandolier, a bullet struck him across the chest, just missing the ribs, and only causing a flesh wound; had the shot been fired a second sooner or later, it would have met him full front and killed him on the spot. The officer in

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command soon recognised the impracticability of forcing the gorge with the limited number of men at his disposal, and ordered a retirement on the laager.

In the meantime the Native Contingent under Lieutenant Henry Colenbrander, had stormed the broken side to the right of the gorge. So strongly, however, was the enemy entrenched in his position behind the rocky barriers, that the attempt to dislodge him, though pluckily made, was ineffectual.

The Inungu Gorge is one of the strongest positions in the Matoppos, the physical features of the country here being eminently well adapted for purposes of defence.

Troopers Cheves, Bern, and Porter died after the fight from the effects of their injuries. Troopers Bell and Heathfield were laid up for a considerable time, but ultimately recovered. Of Colenbrander's Corps two were killed and four wounded.

On the return of the troops to laager, and when the wounded had been attended to, the Column moved off with all possible despatch on the homeward journey through the hills. At almost any point between the place of laager and the open country, the enemy, if given time and so disposed, could, by lining the heights, have made matters very disagreeable for the Column as it slowly wound its way along the narrow defiles of the pass. For nearly three miles the road is hemmed in by lofty hills, and very slow progress only could be made over the difficult ground. The wounded men suffered terribly ; lying on mattresses in the ambulance wagons, they were jolted and jarred over the rocks and ruts ; but there was no help for it, as they knew only too well, and it was a relief to all when, after fully seven hours' marching, the Column reached the Base Camp, distant fourteen miles from the scene of action.

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NICHOLSON'S ATTACK AT INUNGU

Matters had begun to assume a serious aspect. This was the second attempt made to drive the rebels from their strongholds; but so far, to the ordinary individual trooper, whose knowledge of results is almost entirely based on what comes under his personal observation, it seemed to be a toss up who were to drive out and who to be driven. The question of wiping out the rebels appeared to resolve itself into a simple mathematical problem: If to every ten rebels killed or disabled one white man is killed or disabled, how many of Plumer's Column, 500 strong, will remain by the time the 5,000 rebels in the hills are killed or disabled? Or, as the local Press put it about this time: "Carrington has to choose between two alternatives—either he must storm the hills and drive the rebels out at a heavy sacrifice of valuable lives, or he must build a chain of forts at enormous expenditure, and so, in course of time, starve them into submission." This was indeed what it practically amounted to. The rebels held the key to the situation, and they knew it well.

Of necessity, the man in the ranks is only able to faintly surmise what is happening, or what is likely to happen. As a unit in a large organisation, he does not know, nor is he expected to know, anything beyond his particular sphere. "His not to reason why." He receives warning, in the afternoon it maybe, to be ready to march at such and such a time. He is ready; he marches. Where to? No matter. His duty is to keep in front of the man behind, and behind the man in front. In due course the destination of the squadron, detachment, or troop, is reached. Firing commences. He sees a native; the men near him start blazing away; he does the same. Sometimes it is a "friendly," sometimes not. A horse or man near him gets shot, then every one blazes away again at the

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place where the shot came from. So the day wears on. Presently the "Cease firing" and "Assembly" are sounded. The fight is over. He thinks himself lucky not to have been hit. On the way home he describes all he saw, and a good deal he might have seen. Camp is reached. Speculation is rife as to where the Column has been, how many niggers were killed, and what generally was the result of the day's fight.

A week or so later he knows all about it. Press reports of the engagement appear in the Bulawayo papers. The whole business is as clear as daylight. He has participated in another victory, and the rebels, he is glad to find, were utterly routed with heavy loss. They were driven from kopje to kopje, and the few left of them disappeared into the "Never, Never Country," or some place on the other side of Sundown. As he reads, something strikes him as familiar. "By George!" he remarks, "that must have been when we were so and so. You remember," etc., with the same sort of surprise that a man exhibits when he lights on a face in an amateur photograph. "Anyway," he reflects, "a copy of that paper goes home by the next mail; they'll see we're not stopping round here for nothing."

At Nicholson's fight it was generally stated in the Press that a considerable number of the enemy were killed. Their informant, owing to pressure of business and other family matters, did not stop to count corpses, so the usual formula came in handy. The rebels themselves, on being questioned as to their loss at Inungu Gorge on July 24th, affirm positively that only two of their number were killed.

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Inungu Fort.

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CHAPTER IV

The Mtshabezi Valley

Colonel Plumer Turns his Attention to the Tuli Road—Forced March into the Hills—The Officer and the Dog—Fighting on the Rocks—C Squadron in Action—Artillery Shells the Heights—Captain Lloyd Wounded—Mule Pack Train a Failure—Halt at Dawson's Store.

THE rebels, as has been shown, had been attacked with more or less success in their strongholds amongst the hills ranging from Inungu to the N'Kantola. Colonel Plumer now turned his attention to the country lying between the N'Kantola and the Tuli Road, held by such powerful chiefs as Sikombo, Umlugulu, and Somabulana. The nature of the locality to be cleared precluded the possibility of the transport wagons accompanying the Column. Accordingly they were despatched to a point on the Tuli Road—Dawson's Store—distant from Usher's about thirty miles, whither they were to travel by way of Hope Fountain and Spargo's Fort; the Column after making a *détour* through the hills, was to rejoin them in three days' time at that place. The necessary provisions, spare ammunition, forage, etc., were to be conveyed by a pack train of mules and horses, which was to travel with the Column.

On the night of July 31st the main camp was broken up, and the force commenced its march into the hills in a south-westerly direction. After covering a distance of

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about seven miles, a halt was called, and we camped on some rising ground until daybreak. On the range of hills to the right the signal fires of the enemy could be discerned, showing them to be alert as usual and well posted in our latest movement.

During these night marches, strict silence was enforced, and owners of dogs were warned not to allow the animals to follow. This night, however, a strong brute had managed to evade notice, and during the small hours made his presence known by a long-drawn howl. An officer immediately fell on him with his sword, but in the darkness failed to strike a vital spot. The more he slashed and thrust the more the poor beast yelped, and it was only after a desperate struggle and much hubbub that the final despatch was given.

The next day, August 1st, the Column advanced towards the Mtshabezi Valley, the entrance to which was reached before daylight.

The river Mtshabezi has its source amongst the rough broken spurs which fringe the northern side of the Matoppos and heads away to the South-West down the brown expanse of open country known as the valley Mtshabezi. As the gorges and ravines break away abruptly into the valley, a lofty range of hills with steep irregular sides rises to the right, and running parallel with it, overlooks the valley from the South. Amongst the crags and cliffs of this range large numbers of the enemy lay concealed.

On entering the valley, C Squadron, under Major Kershaw, moved away to the right of the Column and proceeded to attack the heights. The men dismounting and leaving their horses under cover, scaled the steep slippery surface of the granite hillside. On gaining the top, after a

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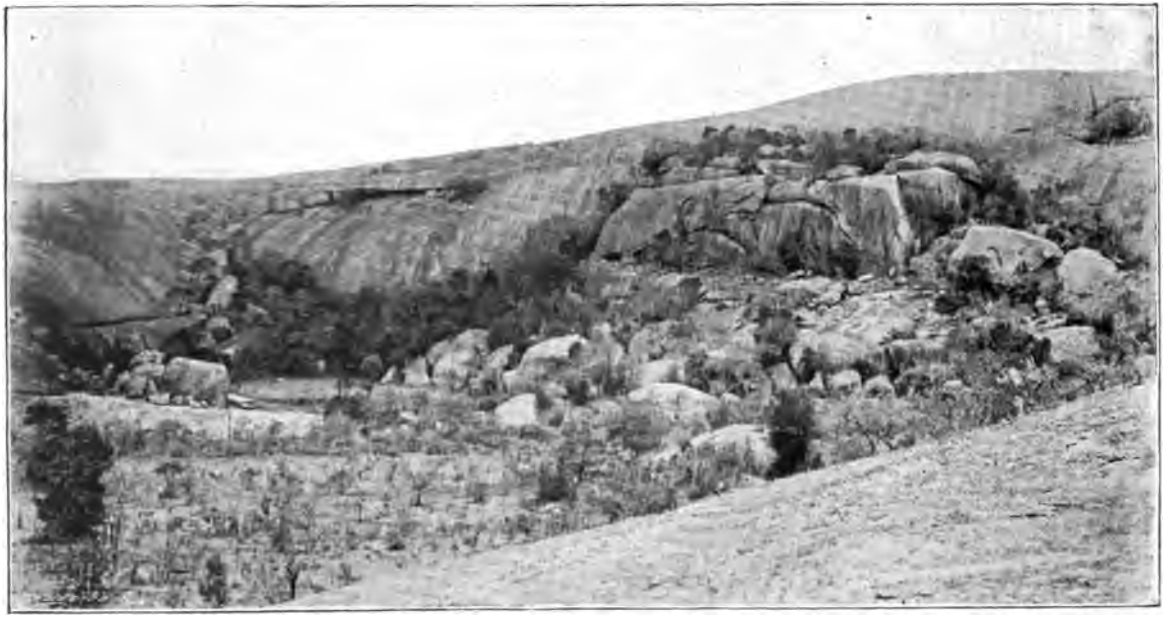

Horse-shoe Gorge, Mtshabezi Valley.

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short breathing space, they advanced along the ridge at the double, and without meeting with any of the enemy reached the highest point of the range. Here the rock formation was found to descend gradually in an almost regular series of steps.

Whilst at the halt, and surveying their position, they were surprised by a sudden volley from below and a spattering of bullets on the rocks around them. Headed by their gallant sergeant-major, C Squadron rushed down the slope, driving the enemy from their cover and making splendid practice the while on their retreating forms. On reaching the bottom of the descent, the enemy took refuge behind some rocks and bushes surrounding a kraal. Here they had two alternatives, to fight or run, as this was their last chance of cover, the country for a space beyond being open. Some of them made a stand and were shot down, whilst the remainder ran helter-skelter across the valley to the nearest kopjes on the right. As they did so, a few shots at long range dropped several and caused the others to bestir themselves most vigorously. From behind the kraal, a rebel under cover of a rock, was making good practice with a Lee-Metford. But showing himself once too often he got a bullet through the head. As he fell, a rush was made by the troopers to secure the rifle, the risk of thus exposing themselves being counterbalanced by the desire of possession. Before reaching it, however, another Kaffir jumped out from behind a rock, seized the rifle and bolted off with it. In the excitement of the moment every one missed him, although he was barely five yards away. All of them were known to be good shots, and on seeing the enterprising native escape with the coveted weapon, from under their very noses, they gave vent to their feelings in language suitable to the occasion. The enemy being for

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the time disposed of, the men of the squadron returned for their horses.

A curious feature in the day's proceedings lay in the fact that the party told off to support C Squadron had not the remotest inkling as to their whereabouts, and were quite surprised when they learnt there had been an engagement. All the fighting on this day fell to the men of C Squadron, who acquitted themselves with credit. Their success was no doubt due to the able manner in which they were manœuvred by their commander, Major Kershaw. C Squadron, it may be added, possessed some of the best rifle shots in the Column, notably Sergeant-Major Josephs, Trooper Cawthorne, and Sergeant Currey, besides a number of others considerably above the average.

Whilst Kershaw's skirmish with the enemy was in progress, the guns were busy shelling the heights from a prominent position on a hill overlooking the Mtshabezi Valley. The remainder of the Column were stationed in the country below, where they were held in reserve during the day.

On the following morning, the Column moved towards the strongholds of Somabulana and Nyanda, where the enemy was believed to be in force. On closer investigation, however, it was found that, with the exception of a few stragglers, the rebels had deserted their kraals and scherms. A large quantity of grain was discovered stored away in granaries and caves, all of which was destroyed.

Here Captain Lloyd, of the Engineer Corps, received a flesh wound in the leg, from a bullet shot by a rebel lying in ambush. This proved to be the only casualty which occurred during the two days' patrol in the hill country. The mule pack train was not a success by any means. During the march over the hill ranges, the packs got adrift,

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Mtshabezi Fort.

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with the result that the track of the Column was marked by provisions of all sorts strewn at intervals along the line of march. Tins of bully beef, biscuits, mealies, etc., were jolted off the backs of the animals ; there was no time for rearranging or collecting, and consequently a large proportion of the commissariat had to be left for any stray Matabele to pick up.

From the valley of the Mtshabezi, the Column moved to the site of Dawson's Store on the Tuli Road, and there awaited the wagons, which arrived on the evening of August 3rd according to appointment. After three nights without kit and blankets, the troops were not sorry to see the train of transport wagons trailing down the mountain road towards the Umzingwani Drift, and hailed with satisfaction the prospect of a comfortable night between the folds of their blankets.

WOODEN POTS AND LADLE MADE BY THE NATIVES.

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CHAPTER V

Sikombo's Fight

Sugarbush Camp—The S. E. Matoppos—March into the Hills—Column Moves Forward—Captain Beresford in a Hot Corner—Sikombo Rallies his Men—C and E Squadrons Scale the Kopjes—Deaths of Major Kershaw and McCloskie—Fighting at Close Quarters—Captain Hoël Llewellyn's Gallantry—The Cape Boys Corps Again—Return to Camp.

THE Column, on leaving Dawson's Store, marched down the Tuli Road for a distance of about seven miles, when a halt was called and camp formed on a ridge overlooking the N'Sezi River. This was known as Sugarbush Camp (now the sight of Umlugulu Fort), which was to be our headquarters for the next fortnight and to serve as a base for conducting operations against the enemy in the neighbouring hills.

Facing the slope on which the Column was camped, and at a distance of a mile or so away, rose the lofty hills of the south-eastern Matoppos, and it was away behind these that the rebel impis were said to be lying. No time was lost. By daybreak next morning, Wednesday, August 5th, the whole Force was under arms, and leaving B Squadron with two Maxims and a field piece to guard the camp, an advance was made into the hills.

After crossing the sandy bed of the N'Sezi and skirting along the base of the range for about two miles, through thickish bush with occasional patches of cultivated land,

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the Column inclined to the left and followed up a sloping valley leading into the heart of the hill country. On nearing the head of this valley the troops were halted, and here we remained for an hour or more, wondering whether the enemy intended to make a stand or no. We were to have fighting enough as events proved before the day was done.

In the meantime the artillery, supported by the dis-

BABOON ROCK.

Showing the route taken by the Column on August 5th on the way to Sikombo's stronghold.

mounted detachments under Captain Beresford, had marched on ahead to shell Sikombo's stronghold. As we lay under the shade of the bushes waiting for the order to advance, a rifle shot would from time to time be heard, and occasionally the boom from the guns would re-echo through the hills on our right front.

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Presently the word was given and the Column moved forward. Following round the line of kopjes to the right for more than a mile, another valley was seen running at right angles to the one we were occupying, and across it were the rocky steeps of Sikombo's position. It was now about half-past nine. Scarcely had we reached this point, when the firing away up the valley still further to the right became heavy and incessant, and mingled with it could be heard the hurried, automatic rapping of the Maxim and the pounding of the field guns.

As soon as the approach of the Column was observed by the advance party, above the noise of the fusillade, the bugle was heard to sound "Cease firing," in order to permit of our immediate progress to the front. Crossing over a slight rocky spur, the mounted men in half-sections streamed into the next valley at the gallop, and it immediately became apparent that the enemy was in strong force and the engagement general.

Captain Beresford as it appeared had, with his dismounted detachment and the artillery, taken up a position on a hill to the West of Sikombo's position. A flag signal from him told Colonel Plumer that he was surrounded by the enemy and that he wished for reinforcements, but that so far he was holding his own. Thereupon A Squadron, under Captain Bowden, was immediately despatched to his support, whilst C and E Squadrons, under Major Kershaw and Captain Drury respectively, galloped across some mealie fields to the foot of Sikombo's Hill where they dismounted, and leaving their horses under cover, started to storm the position on foot.

As soon as this move was observed by the enemy a horn was blown, at the sound of which the rebels, taking shelter in the caves and behind the great boulders, opened

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Sikombo and his Wives.

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fire upon our men as they clambered slantwise up the steep and difficult ascent.

Major Kershaw, eager and active as ever, led his men up the almost vertical walls of bare granite, where scarce a foothold could be obtained, under a heavy fire from above. The gallant officer with a few followers was well in advance of the rest of his men, and had in fact almost gained the summit, when he fell, mortally wounded, shot through the body. A trooper it appears who was with him had but a few moments before suggested that he should wait for a breathing space under cover of some rocks, as the labour of climbing had been excessive. Replying in the negative, the Major, disdainful of danger or fatigue, pushed on closely followed by Sergeant-Major McCloskie, Troopers Baron, Cawthorne and others. Hardly had they climbed a dozen steps when a rebel hidden behind a rock fired the fatal shot, only to be himself in his turn shot dead by Baron. Almost at the same moment, Sergeant-Major McCloskie, a little to the left of his leader, received his death wound. In this case the shot was fired from immediately above as he was looking upwards, the bullet passing through the roof of his mouth and thence into his body. Both Major Kershaw and McCloskie expired within a few minutes of receiving their injuries, and their lifeless bodies were with great difficulty borne down to the shelter of the rocks where the horses had been left.

In connection with McCloskie's death it may be mentioned that at the time he and another non-com. of the same rank named Morrison, were racing each other to the top of the hill, and McCloskie was winning when the contest was thus tragically ended.

Whilst this was going on, the Maxim Detachment of the

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M.R.F., under Lieutenant Pyke, had lost a good fellow in the person of Sergeant A. Innes-Ker. Ker had been standing near his gun under shelter of some rocks at the base of the hill. A rebel concealed behind a huge boulder kept on firing at Ker and his party. Picking up a rifle, Ker stepped out for the purpose of dislodging him, but had barely advanced three paces into the open when a "potleg" crashed through his forehead, carrying away the front half of his skull. Poor Ker had but a few days before, at his own request, been transferred from the charge of a naval-carriage Maxim to a tripod gun in order to see more of the fighting, for when in the hills it was customary to leave the galloping Maxims to guard the camp, whilst the tripods, packed on horses, accompanied the Column to the front.

On the summit of this same kopje, D and E Squadrons had engaged a strong party of the rebels and had succeeded in driving them over an adjacent hill, shooting many of them down as they broke and fled. Whilst thus employed Sergeant William Gibbs was shot through both legs and died in terrible agony. His body was carried by his comrades to where the guns were stationed, fully half a mile away, on what is now generally spoken of as "Case-Shot Kopje."

The winning of this position by Beresford prior to the general engagement of the Column, entailed some hard fighting at close quarters. The artillery with its dismounted escort had moved to take up the required position, without an advance guard ahead of the main body. This nearly resulted in disaster. The detachment when scaling the steep uneven side of the hill, was of necessity thrown into some disorder. As it reached the summit the rebels, who had been waiting under cover, opened a

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Sikombo's Stronghold. (Fight of August 5th.)

The upper cross on the summit of Kopje shows the spot where Major Kershaw and Sergeant-Major McCloskie fell. The lower cross on the right shows the spot where Sergeant Innes Ker fell.

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heavy fire, and for the first few minutes the situation was a critical one. Hurriedly the guns of the mountain battery were limbered up and brought into action, and not a moment too soon. Scarcely had this been accomplished when the rebels made a desperate rush from the surrounding rocks. Only when within a few paces of the guns did a charge of case, point-blank, effectually stop their further progress. Though held in check, they kept up a hot fire from behind clumps of trees and rocks, and succeeded in wounding both the artillery officers, Lieutenants McCulloch and Fraser, each of whom received a shot in the leg. Near this spot Sergeant-Major Ainslie of the M.M.P. was shot through the head and fell.

On the slope to the left, the Maxim of the M.M.P. was stationed under the command of Captain Hoël Llewellyn, whose pluck and coolness on this occasion will long be remembered. Not wishing (it is said) to needlessly expose his men to fire, he told them to take cover while he manipulated the gun. With the utmost presence of mind this officer, single-handed, swept the rebels with his Maxim as they rushed in a body to try and carry the position by assault. At the same moment, Evelyn Holmes, orderly to the adjutant and a promising young fellow, seeing the critical state of affairs and Llewellyn virtually unsupported, ran to his assistance. Barely had he reached the gun when he was struck by a bullet in the thigh, and, as it afterwards proved, paid for his bravery with his life. Another deeply regretable casualty was that of Lieutenant Hervey, who while leading the Johannesburg contingent, received a mortal wound through the body as he stood on a rock waving his men on to the attack. This occurred on the top of the ridge to the right of the guns where the dismounted men were stationed.

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The enemy finding that they were not gaining ground, and seeing our reinforcements advancing up the valley, now assumed the defensive, and lined the sides and tops of the adjacent hills, from which they were only driven after the most stubborn resistance.

Meanwhile Major Robertson and his Cape Boys were busily engaged on the far side of the stronghold. Fighting their way up a long gorge and dislodging the rebels as they slowly advanced in irregular order, they gave an excellent account of themselves. At one place it was necessary to scale the entire side of the stronghold in order to attack the enemy on an elevated plateau beyond. To effect this, many had to take their boots off in order to obtain a footing on the slippery granite. During the escalade their adjutant, Lieutenant the Hon. H. Howard, received a flesh wound in the leg, which however did not wholly prevent him from taking an active part in the engagement. Between two and three o'clock the "Assembly" was sounded, when the wounded having been attended to and placed on stretchers, the Column moved away from the scene of action on the homeward march.

The bodies of Sergeant-Major Ainslie and Sergeant Gibbs were buried on Case-Shot Kopje, the remains of Major Kershaw, Sergeant-Major McCloskie and Sergeant Ker being conveyed into camp. In the hurry of the fight Ker's body had been left where he fell, and as the Column filed away, a small party was detailed to return and secure it. They succeeded in doing so, but narrowly escaped being shot down by some of the enemy who were still lurking about the place.

The return march through the hills was necessarily slow owing to the number of wounded, and it was not

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until eight o'clock in the evening that the Column reached camp.

Though the rebels had been defeated and driven from their position, the cost to our side had been exceptionally severe, the detail of the killed and wounded being as follows:—

Killed in Action.

Major F. E. Kershaw	2nd Batt. York and Lancaster Regiment.
Sergeant-Major McCloskie	C Squadron, M.R.F.
,, Wm. Gibbs	,, ,, ,,
,, Innes-Ker	Maxim Detachment, M.R.F.
,, Major A. Ainslie	M.M.P.

Died Afterwards from Effects of Wounds.

Lieutenant H. J. A. Hervey	Dismounted Troop, M.R.F.
Trooper Evelyn Holmes	D Squadron, M.R.F.

Wounded in Action.

Lieutenant H. R. F. McCulloch	Royal Artillery.
,, N. W. Fraser	Yorks West Riding Regiment.
Captain C. H. Fowler	C Squadron, M.R.F.
Sergeant-Major W. Josephs	,, ,, ,,
,, ,, R. Dumeresq	D ,, ,,
,, E. Brabant	C ,, ,,
Corporal R. Turnbull	Dismounted Troop, M.R.F.
Sergeant Wm. Currie	C Squadron, M.R.F.
Trooper T. Gordon	I Troop, M.M.P.
Lieutenant the Hon. H. Howard	Cape Boys Corps.
Captain Windley	Colenbrander's Native Contingent.

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In addition to the above two Cape Boys were wounded, thus bringing the number up to a score.

The following morning the bodies of Major F. Kershaw and Sergeants Innes-Ker and McCloskie were laid to rest with military honours just outside the camp, Father Barthelemy reading the Burial Service over them.

Before night fell poor Hervey passed away. From the moment he was wounded until his death he suffered constant pain, but he bore up with the utmost fortitude and met his end with resignation. One of his last remarks with reference to his approaching end was pathetically humorous. "Well," said he, "I suppose before long I shall be extending the British Empire in Jupiter or somewhere else." Mr. Hervey had just previous to the rebellion been appointed Civil Commissioner for Barotseland.

Poor young Holmes too, who was wounded in the upper part of the thigh, underwent amputation of the leg, when it was found that the bone had been badly shattered by a piece of quartz encased in lead. The operation, though affording him some relief from acute pain, was however of no permanent avail; he lingered for four days and then succumbed, conscious to the last.

A perceptible gloom was cast over the whole Force by the untimely deaths of these brave comrades in arms. The loss of Major Kershaw was keenly felt by all. His *verve* and courage during the operations had become proverbial. The word fear had no meaning for him, his intrepidity in many cases amounting almost to recklessness. The gallant associations surrounding his death are worthy of the best traditions of the British race, and from Colonel Plumer downwards there was not one who felt unmoved when the sad truth became known.

After the burials on the Thursday morning, the troops

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View from Case Shot Kopje (taken from the spot where the guns were stationed).

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were drawn up into a hollow square and General Carrington briefly addressed them, congratulating the Force on the achievements of the previous day, and at the same time expressing deep regret at the loss of the valuable lives which the defeat of the rebels had cost.

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CHAPTER VI

A Night March and a Rebel Attack

A March under the Stars—Slow Progress—Where are We?—The Enemy's Fires—The Ambulance in Danger—The Cape Boys' Skirmish—A Miraculous Escape—On a Granite Range—Halt for the Night—The Enemy Attack—A Cheerless Bivouac—Return to Sugarbush Camp.

AT general parade on the afternoon of Saturday, August 8th, it was stated in "Orders" that the Column would march into the hills that night. Further, that markers would be posted at sundown; the said markers to remain at their posts until the Column moved off; that the march would be conducted in strict silence, no smoking allowed or "dop" admitted. The objective point was the stronghold of Umlugulu, paramount chief of that part of the country. This latter piece of information, needless to remark, did not appear in "Orders," and the vague uncertainty of our wanderings on that night and the following day, was only cleared up by a stray copy of a paper sometime during the next week.

At 12 midnight, under a starlit sky, we started away from camp with our faces towards the hills. There is an undefinable something about a night march which stamps itself on the memory, and creates an impression that may be warranted to last. In the dark forms of the men as each troop files past silently, and takes up its allotted position in the line of march; the muttered words of com-

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mand; the pervading drowsiness induced by the brief interval of broken slumber preceding the appointed hour of starting; the unknown destination, and strange surmises as to the possibilities of the next twenty-four hours that occur to one's mind. And then, as the Column moves off at funereal pace along the winding track, the stillness of the night broken only by the jingling of the mule harness, the steady onward tramp of many feet, or occasionally a smothered but vehement oath as a sleepy warrior stumbles into the painful embrace of a thorn-bush, leaves a deep impression. Soon the hills began to loom up in front of us, and the sharp clatter of shod hoofs on the granite surface, and the constant halting of the Column, made it evident that we had exchanged the grassy veldt for the rocks and bushes of the mountain passes.

The progress of the Column over the difficult ground was laborious and slow to the last degree. As the advance party met an obstacle, the whole Column would come to a halt; then on again for a few paces, then halt, and so on all through the night. At length we seemed to have reached the climax. We were now fairly among the boulders, and as we clambered over, under, and around, we fell to wondering how on earth the mules of the mountain battery, clever as they are in a rough country, had managed to negotiate these obstacles. There was a mounted troop behind also, and there was much speculation as to what would become of them. It transpired afterwards that they had got hopelessly "bushed," and after wandering about amongst the rocks for hours in the vain attempt to find a track or pick up with the Column, had finally returned to camp, taking with them the food, blankets, and *impedimenta* of the Scouts and others who were ahead, and who in consequence found themselves later on in a

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sorry plight. As we stumbled on through the darkness, it was hinted that our party had lost touch with the Column in front; and such indeed proved to be the case. What would be the upshot of all this? At any moment we might come upon the rebel impis and then, broken up and utterly disjointed as the Column was, who could tell what might happen before dawn? About an hour before daybreak we—that is to say the Ambulance Corps, about thirty rifles, and eighty or one hundred "friendlies"—found ourselves marching down a well-trodden mountain track. On reaching a watercourse which wound its way through a narrow valley, a tall kopje, 500 or 600 feet high, was seen rising up to the right, the base of it not more than 200 yards distant from the track we were following. Here a halt was made. Soon our attention was directed to numerous fires dotted about on the hillside. We were evidently seen. Here and there fresh fires sprang up out of the gloom, and now and again the voices of the natives could be heard calling and answering. We were evidently in the neighbourhood of an impi; and if they took it into their heads to swoop down upon us, we were likely to have a warm time. Having no Maxim, and not counting upon the "friendlies," who in an emergency were worse than useless, we had certainly less than forty rifles, so that the chance of being cut up if a general attack was made, seemed to be a practical certainty. It had been decided to form up amongst some rocks, and see the business through, and an order to that effect was actually given, when word was received that the Column had been descried about a mile ahead. We started off without delay, and as the streaks of dawn appeared in the sky, were not a little relieved to find ourselves once more under Plumer's command. Whoever was responsible for the

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disintegration of the Column during that night march through the pass, or at whose instance that particular line of march was taken, matters little now; but it is beyond question that had the rebels waylaid and attacked any one of the three or four sections which were adrift from the main body, a disaster would have been inevitable.

Interviewing Babayana on the subject since the cessation of hostilities, he positively stated a large impi was collected on the hill referred to, but that not wishing to take the initiative, they had remained quiet, or as he put it, "You were so close to us that we could have rolled rocks down and killed every one of you." That he was there seems probable, but that he could have pulverised us with boulders is certainly open to doubt, although at the time etiquette forbade arguing the point.

Leaving the valley, the Column wended its way up a track which Mark Twain would have described as "straighter than a corkscrew, but not as straight as a rainbow." Halting every now and again as the mules struggled onward and upward over the slippery boulders, ridge after ridge was scaled, until at length we gained the top of the main range. From this height one could obtain a good idea of the character of the Matoppo Hills country. Immediately below to the left was a bird's-eye view of the scene of the engagement on the previous Wednesday. Viewed by the mellow light of early morning, the panorama upon which the eye rested was one of great variety and beauty. But a few hours before, with a scope of vision limited to a few feet, one had been hardly able to identify the man immediately ahead; now a turn of the head commanded a view extending over miles and miles of bald hill peaks, winding

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valleys, mountain gorges, rugged kopjes and bush-covered slopes, the whole region thrown into one vast patchwork of light and shadow by the oblique rays of the rising sun. But the beauty of the scenery did not blind us to the fact that we had fasted during the night, and we were quite ready, when a halt was called, to discuss the contents of our haversacks.

Meanwhile a detachment of the Cape Boys, who had been flanking to the right, was heard firing away amongst the kopjes. On rejoining the Column they reported having met a small body of the enemy, who were soon however driven out of their position, leaving four of their number dead. Sergeant-Major Kannemeyer, of the Cape Boys, had had an almost miraculous escape. As he was leading his party up the kopje, a bullet struck against a cartridge in his bandolier and glancing off, passed between his body and the upper part of his arm, slightly grazing the latter. The cartridge was dented just below the rim, but strangely enough had not exploded. Beyond a little stiffness, Kannemeyer suffered no inconvenience.

At eight o'clock or thereabouts a halt was called, and the mountain battery was brought to bear on some kraals which could be seen among the rocks on the opposite hillside. Shot after shot was fired into them, but no natives appearing, some "friendlies" were sent over to make a personal call. On reaching the place they found no one at home, and returned after setting fire to the huts.

After a rest of two hours the Column descended into the valley, and branching off to the right, proceeded along a gradually ascending ridge, which in a couple of miles or so brought us on to a bare rocky plateau, com-

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manding an extensive view of a wide valley between ourselves and the heights opposite. Here the guns under Captain Llewellyn were run out to the edge of the plateau, and began shelling the heights across the valley with ring and shrapnel. For an hour or more we were interested spectators of this artillery practice. The men of the mountain battery were well up in their work, and fired the pieces with great precision and despatch. The range of hills against which the shots were directed was about 1,200 yards distant, so that it was difficult to determine the amount of damage done, even with the aid of glasses. Whether any of the shells took effect upon the enemy it would be hard to say, but the sight of them hurtling over the valley and exploding amongst the rocks and bushes in their neighbourhood, must have impressed the natives considerably. During the afternoon several head of cattle were captured, and driven into an opening in the rocks near our position.

Colonel Plumer decided to bivouac here for the night. Just before sundown, as the pickets were falling in for parade, the rebels, who had crept up unobserved under cover of the rocks and bushes, opened fire upon us from the right front of the position. In less time than it takes to tell, every man was lying down behind his heap of rocks, and a deadly fusillade from two sides of the square was opened on the enemy. At the same time the Maxim at the corner started rapping out the shots, whilst Captain Llewellyn was to be seen running in his socks towards one of his guns shouting the order "Action front, load case." The enemy had evidently not calculated on such a warm reception, and retired for the time being. Later on, a detachment of Cape Boys was sent off to occupy a position on a piece of rising ground about

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200 yards away, where it was believed the enemy were still in hiding between the boulders. Some brisk firing a few minutes after their departure proved this to be the case. We could hear the Cape Boys and Matabele exchanging compliments, no doubt more expressive than polite. One of the latter was heard to call out in his native tongue, "Where are you going to sleep to-night?" Every one fully expected a night attack, but either the enemy was not in sufficiently large numbers, or else he had had enough already. As it afterwards turned out, however, they had other plans in view.

That night we lay down on the bare hill top; the majority of the men having no blankets or extra covering of any sort, spent a very cheerless time. The wind was bitterly cold, and towards midnight it increased to a gale accompanied with rain, so that altogether we were not comfortably situated, and we welcomed the approach of dawn with unmixed feelings of satisfaction. The engagement of the previous evening fortunately resulted in no casualty on our side, the enemy's fire being very erratic. They, on the contrary, had suffered heavily. Thirteen bodies were found lying in one place not more than eighty yards distant from the Maxim, which had evidently caught them *en masse*. It was generally surmised that the capture of the cattle before mentioned had provoked the attack, and no doubt this had a great deal to do with it, for nothing renders a Matabele more desperate than a raid on his live-stock. With the morning light the Column started on the return journey to Sugarbush Camp, which it reached in the afternoon without further incident.

Some weeks later the writer heard, on the best authority, that one of the rebels who had attacked us on the rock, when asked why they had retired without making another

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attempt upon our position, stated in reply that they expected the Column would have continued to advance further into the hills in the same direction on the following day, and with that idea in view a large number of them had lined the sides of the valley through which we would have passed, and intended there to intercept our progress. Plumer's return, however, completely nonplussed them. Had we gone on, no doubt there would have been a repetition of the scene at Laing's graveyard. As it was, those shots on the 9th proved to be the last fired at the rebels in the Matoppo Hills.

A "FIND" OF CARTRIDGES.

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CHAPTER VII

Suspension of Hostilities

Force or Strategy—Camp Recreation—An Amusing Incident—A False Alarm—Another Phantom Impi—The Filabusi Patrol—Disbandment of the Corps.

DURING the next week the force at Sugarbush Camp was kept in a state of masterly inactivity. Mr. Rhodes in the meanwhile had arrived, as also had Mr. Johan Colenbrander, bringing with him Mrs. Colenbrander and her sister Mrs. Smith. Rumours of impending negotiations with the rebels were freely circulated, which the presence of the two ladies seemed to justify, and the events that followed proved rumour for once to be correct. So, after all, the insurgent Matabele were not to be rooted out and made no more a people, the *suaviter in modo* was now to be substituted for the *fortiter in re*, and the Campaign was to result in a "draw,"—not a very satisfactory termination as it then appeared, but under the circumstances no doubt it was the only rational solution of the problem.

To enliven the monotony of camp life, some sports were arranged to last over two days. After the grim horrors of war, it was a welcome relief to most of us to have our thoughts and attention diverted into other channels, and all took a more or less active interest in them. A wagon was hauled on to the ground to serve as a grand stand

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A Funeral at Malema Camp.

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for those of the wounded whose injuries permitted them to be present. The programme of events included jumping, running, sack and hurdle races, all of which were keenly contested, and proved that the Column was not deficient in athletes. Two enterprising individuals erected "Aunt Sallies" in front of some buck sails, and whilst providing amusement, improved the shining hour at the rate of "three shies a bob."

An amusing incident occurred towards the close of the sports on the second day. The final of the "Zereba" or V.C. race was being run. In this event the competitors gallop up the course, dismount on reaching the end, "rescue" dummies of wounded men, and under heavy fire remount and return with their burdens to the starting-point. As this was in progress a horseman was seen riding up at a canter. The new-comer, it was noted, wore the helmet and Khaki dress of the Regulars. His sudden appearance on the scene caused some surprise, but as it turned out he had more occasion for surprise than any. It was one of the York and Lancaster Regiment who had just arrived from Bulawayo. The flankers hearing volley firing ahead, jumped to the natural conclusion that we were having a brush with the rebels, and were not a little astonished to find themselves on the point of charging into a crowd of spectators intent on peaceful sport.

During our sojourn at Sugarbush Camp, an official proclamation was issued inviting the rebels to surrender. The delicate process of entering upon negotiations with the Matebele in the hills, the skilful manner in which they were eventually brought about through the medium of John Grootboom, and the indabas which followed between Mr. Rhodes and the rebels, are described in the next chapter. At the end of a fortnight reports of the rebels

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massing again near Inungu with hostile intent reaching headquarters, the Column was ordered back to Usher's. Accordingly, on the evening of August 17th, part of the Force moved off in that direction along a new road (previously prepared by the Cape Boys Corps), which, skirting the line of the Matoppo range, reduced the distance very appreciably. The remainder followed two days later, when the whole Force was concentrated near the site of the first Matoppo Base Camp between the hills and the Malema River, and here it remained until September 2nd awaiting events.

The troops during this period of idleness beguiled the time with football, cricket, "smokers" and such other entertainments as they were able to improvise. Regular military sports were organised, including such events as lemon-cutting, tent-pegging, and steeple-chasing. Each afternoon intending competitors were to be seen busily training in anticipation; but the unexpected happened, and these sports were not held after all. On September 3rd, the day fixed upon, everything was in readiness and the programme was just about to be started upon, when 150 men were suddenly ordered to proceed under Captain Drury to Bulawayo. This stopped all further idea of sport, much to every one's disappointment.

It had been reported to the authorities that a rebel impi was menacing a place known as Redbank—some twenty miles to the north-west of Bulawayo. The rumour, however, proved to be entirely unfounded, and Drury's detachment was held in waiting on the Umguza River, seven miles to the north of the town, until September 10th, when it was ordered on patrol to the Mulingwane Hills in the district of Filabusi.

This expedition was made for the purpose of trying

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Major-General Sir F. Carrington addressing the troops of the M.R.F. at the close of operations.

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conclusions with some hostile natives lying in the hills in the direction of Balla Balla Mountain, who not having come in contact with our troops, were still breathing defiance. On the evening of the third day, whilst laager was being formed at a spot in the vicinity of the hill-country, a chain of signal fires was observed extending right along the line of hills as far as the eye could reach. On the following day the advance guard rode into a body of natives hiding in the thick bush. Several of their number were brought into camp, where Native Commissioner Taylor held a long indaba with them. They stated they had come down to pick land, and had been alarmed to see the detachment coming against them, as they supposed, with no friendly intent. The ruins of several stores were passed, all of which had been destroyed and looted by the Matabele. Edkins' Store at Filabusi was visited, and a number of natives were seen, who fled as soon as they spied the troops; here the remains of murdered white men were found and interred. It was evident that the rebels had no stomach for fighting, and the patrol returned to Bulawayo after a pleasant but uneventful trip, arriving back at the Malema Camp on September 26th.

The last patrol of Plumer's Force was down the Tuli Road, made with the object of establishing two forts, one near Grainger's Store and the other near the river Manzi-M'Nyama. Detachments were left at each place to construct and garrison these forts, and the remainder returned to camp, which they reached on October 11th. After a fortnight's waiting, the High Commissioner authorised the disbandment of the Corps, and all those who were not remaining in Rhodesia were marched down country in two parties which left on October 27th and 30th respectively.

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SECTION V

CECIL RHODES, PEACEMAKER

Critical Position of Affairs—A Lucky Capture—John Grootboom—The Historical Indaba—Mr. Rhodes Negotiates—Dangerous Journey—The Story of Umzilikaye and the Matabele Nation—The Tuli Road Open—Satisfactory Termination—The Second Indaba—Unruly Conduct of Young Indunas—Peace or War—Indunas Ask for Time to Consider—The Third Indaba—Sir Richard Martin—Mr. Rhodes Appeals to the Indunas—Indaba Camp—Indunas' Opinion of General Carrington—The Final Indaba—Peace at Last—The Native Policy—Mr. Rhodes' Farewell—"Umlamulan Mkunzi."

FOR some time prior to the conclusion of hostilities it had been apparent that if the rebels were to be completely subjugated, further prolongation of an already costly campaign, requiring more men, more forts, and above all a more plentiful supply of provisions, would be necessary. There was no question as to the readiness of all under arms to carry out the war to its bitter end. Indeed, the idea of peace at this time was distasteful to most. There were two factors, however, which those responsible for the issues of the situation had to take into serious account.

The Commissariat being sorely tasked to keep pace with actual requirements, and the approach of the rainy season, with increased difficulties of transport, rendered the maintenance and mobilisation of such a large force practically impossible. In short, matters were virtually at a deadlock.

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It was then that the " strong, silent man " took a hand in the game of which till then he had been but a keenly interested spectator. Taking upon his own shoulders a responsibility which few people would have dared, Mr. Rhodes, with splendid audacity, gave himself *carte blanche* to act as he thought fit. Upon his initiative negotiations were entered into with the enemy.

Knowing that by this time the rebels must be in sore straits for want of food, it seemed to him highly probable that they would be glad to seize the opportunity to lay down their arms. The chief question to be decided was the means which could best be employed to establish communication with a barbarous enemy secure among the hills and in a state of armed defiance. As it happened chance favoured the furtherance of the scheme. A detachment of Cape Boys, while out on a foray, captured an old woman and brought her back with them into camp. The prisoner proved to be no other than Nyambezana (" child of tears," literally a " little tear "), of the family of Siwele, daughter of Marongwe, and one of the principal wives of Umsilikaze. No better emissary could be desired. Providing the ancient dame with two flags, one white and one red, and with half a bag of mealies, she was carried on a stretcher by two boys under the charge of N. C. Richardson, and was deposited within sight of Nyanda's Kraal.

Her instructions were to tell the natives that if they wished to continue fighting they were to place the red flag under the white one, which was tied to a stick placed among some prominent rocks. If, on the contrary, they wished for peace, they were simply to leave the white one where it was. On going up the next day to see which alternative they had chosen, it was found that Nyambezana

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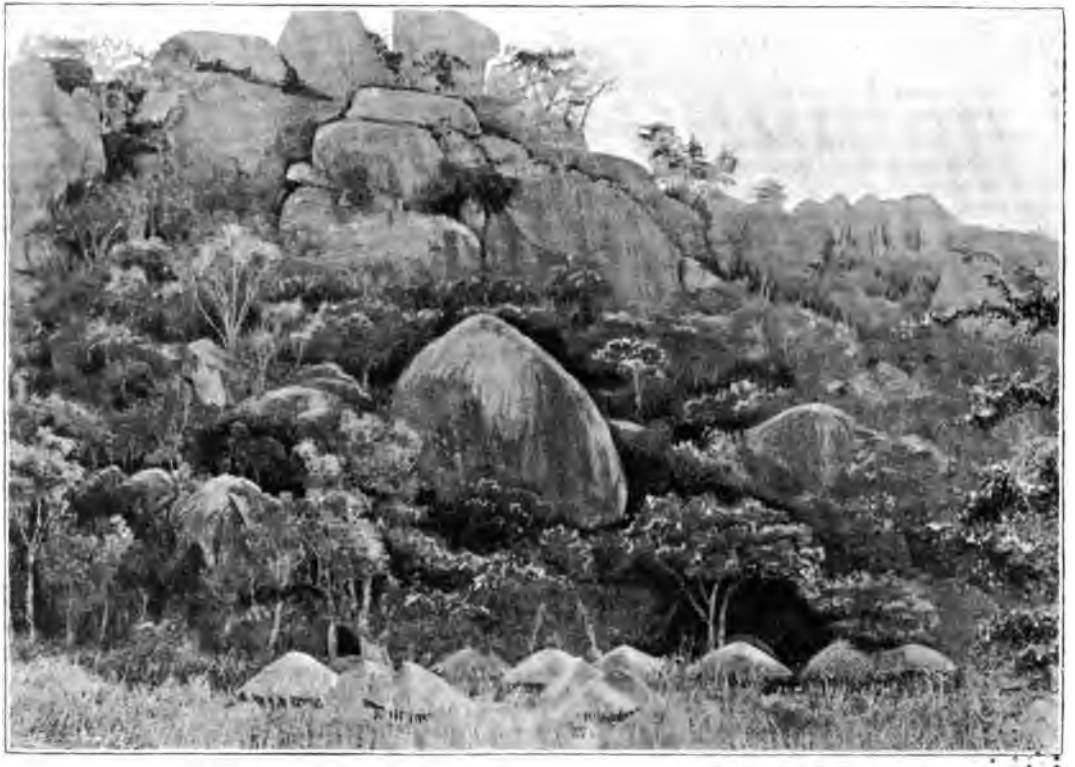

Nyanda's Kraal.

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had disappeared, and with her both flags. This was taken to mean that the natives required time to consider. On the following day the white flag was seen flying in its original place. Then came the question as to who should go up and parley with the enemy. N. C. Richardson offered himself, but Mr. Rhodes would not allow him to risk his life. Eventually volunteers were called for from among the Cape Boys Corps, and two of them, James M'kiza and John Sail, both of them Zulus, agreed for the sum of £25 apiece to go and learn the intentions of the Matabele. The conduct of these delicate negotiations was entrusted to the management of John Grootboom and these two men, and as the result of their mission, Mr. Rhodes decided to go and interview the rebel chiefs in person.

The account of the famous Matoppo Indaba, the first step to what came to be known as "Rhodes' Peace," is best told in the words of Mr. Vere Stent, the only newspaper correspondent present :—

THE HISTORICAL INDABA.

This indaba was the result of the negotiations initiated by Mr. Rhodes, and carried on through John Grootboom, with the rebels in the Matoppo Hills. It had been apparent for some time that the rebels wished to surrender, but were afraid to do so on account of the murders which had been committed. Knowing this, and hearing it from every prisoner captured, Mr. Rhodes thought that a good end might be accomplished by communicating with the insurgents. His first object was to get in touch with the headmen, and with this end in view negotiations were commenced through Grootboom. As a result of these negotiations, on Friday, the 21st, at 12 o'clock noon, John

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Grootboom arrived in camp, and stated that six principal indunas, two princes, and thirty-four officers and headmen of towns, had assembled some four or five miles from the camp in the hills beyond N'Seri. Grootboom said these men were afraid to come on further, and wished to see Mr. Colenbrander. They did not venture to summon so great a man as Mr. Rhodes to them, but if he came he would be welcome.

Mr. Rhodes without hesitation decided to go, and his staff—Mr. Moncrief, Mr. Grimmer, Captain Cardigan—were anxious to accompany him. Grootboom, however, stipulated that at the very most only four white men should enter into the hills. Every additional white man, he said, increased the risk of treachery. Consequently, it was decided that Mr. Colenbrander, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and Dr. Sauer, who had done much towards the accomplishment of this good end, should enter the hills, accompanied by Mr. Stent (the *Cape Times* correspondent), as Mr. Rhodes stated that it would be advisable that a representative of public opinion should be present at the indaba. Shortly after 12 o'clock, these four gentlemen, well-mounted, rode out of the camp, accompanied by John Grootboom and John Makunga. Mr. Rhodes was unarmed, and carried only a switch; Messrs. Colenbrander, Sauer, and Stent each carried a revolver. Proceeding on their way, leaving a huge castellated kopje on their left, and a rugged mass of rocks on their right, they entered the hills through a pass about one mile from the camp. Following a narrow footpath bounded on either side by kopjes, they arrived at length very near the one on which Major Kershaw met his death on August 5th.

On reaching a point within 100 yards of some kopjes, where a number of natives were seen standing about,

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they dismounted from their horses, and took up their position upon a large ant-heap, rising from the middle of an old mealie garden, and with at most a clear fifty yards all around. Within a hundred yards on the immediate front a huge kopje, rugged and bushy, and covered with caves, rose at least 300 feet high; to the rear was dense

NATIVE WOMEN GRINDING MEALIES.

bush, on the left lay the path along which they had come, and to the right a rugged and impassable valley. The only retreat was along the path which had been used to reach the scene of the indaba. To have retired down this path would have meant passing through at least three positions

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which could have been easily held by ten men against a hundred. John Grootboom advanced towards the indunas, and for a moment was lost to sight amongst them.

The crisis had arrived. If treachery were meant he would be shot, and the deputation could scarcely share a better fate. Upon the kopje in front, and upon the most distant kopjes to the right and left, numbers of heads appeared against the skyline watching the indaba. Each head was that of an armed Matabele, and it was evident that a large number of "Majakas" were round the spot. The result of Grootboom's advance was awaited in silence. Mr. Rhodes had dismounted, although advised to remain on his horse by both Mr. Colenbrander and Dr. Sauer, and was standing upon the lower slopes of the ant-heap with both hands in his pockets. Turning to one of the party, he remarked, "This is very exciting." He smiled as he spoke, and then added in that manner peculiar to him, "This is one of the incidents in life that make it worth living." Then from the kopje a white flag flashed out, and a strange, fantastic procession of forty-four indunas, headed by the famous flag of truce, advanced towards the ant-heap. Mr. Rhodes remarked, "It is not what we have to fear from these men, but from some of the rapid instructions that may have been issued by the M'Limo, and you never know what the M'Limo may tell them."

After this there was silence. The horses were hitched to a neighbouring tree stump. Escape was impossible. The least sign of nervousness might precipitate a disaster. The lives of hundreds of men, white and black, were hanging in the balance. Slowly the procession approached to within at least ten yards of the whites; Sikombo at the head of it, the others following, more or less in their order of rank, in single file. The flag-bearer then thrust the flag

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of truce into the ground, and it waved over the proceedings during the whole of the indaba. The chiefs formed a semi-circle in front of Mr. Rhodes: Somabulana, Sikombo, Umlugulu, Dhliso, Nyanda, and Bidi in the centre, and the other men and officers to the right and left.

JOHN GROOTBOOM.

Nearly every man wore the ring upon his head, and nearly all were men of mature age. It was evident that the indunas present were representative of the Matabele nation. Mr. Rhodes was seated half-way up the ant-heap, Mr. Stent on his immediate left, Mr. Colenbrander a little

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lower down to the left again, and Dr. Sauer on the right of Mr. Rhodes, almost on the top of the ant-heap. Mr. Rhodes broke the silence with the words, "Mechlo mshlope."[1] As one man, there came a low murmur of assent, and following upon it words which may be translated, "The same to you and your indunas, Father." Again there was a short silence. Then Mr. Rhodes, turning to Mr. Colenbrander, said, "Very well, tell them; let us begin our business." Then Mr. Colenbrander, addressing Sikombo and Somabulana, said, "Speak to Rhodes, your father, who has come amongst you with peace in his heart." Once more came a guttural "Ehia," and Somabulana commenced speaking. He is a man of well over fifty years, with a pleasant, almost humorous, face. He has a grey pointed beard, and grisly woolly hair, and on this occasion wore a hat and coat with the usual "muchi."[2]

He commenced the story of the Matabele nation, from the days of Umzilikaze (the drinker of blood) and his murderous march through the Transvaal and across the Limpopo, down to the present rebellion. Speaking of the accession of Lobengula, he told how the king had sent messengers to the great Queen across the water, speaking with intense reverence of our "Inkosikaas."[3] Although he had not in his heart and formally, submitted to her Government, he had "konsaad"[4] to her greatness. He told how the white man coming to the East had built for himself towns and cities there. How Lobengula knew them not,

[1] Literally "White Eyes," but used in this case as an idiom, meaning, "We greet you who have come well out of a bad place." It is the customary native salutation to warriors returning from battle.

[2] A piece of skin resembling the Highland "sporran."

[3] Woman chieftain.

[4] The expression means here "acknowledged."

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and only desired speech with the great Queen. How through unforeseen circumstances, and because he had not been able to hold in the young men, there was war between the white man and the king. How they sent messengers southward to Tati—ambassadors of peace—who were slaughtered. How the nation did not understand it, and armed themselves against the young white men who were invading them. Of the result of the fighting he spoke little, and passed rapidly on to the death of the king. "Then," said Somabulana, with great pathos in his voice, "then came the death of our king, and we, the indunas, never having wished to fight with the white men, surrendered." Jameson, he continued, had treated them well, and had promised them that only the king's cattle would be taken from them, and that they should retain their own. This promise they were thankful for, but it had not been kept.

They knew that they had amongst them thieves who retained not only their own cattle, but the king's. These men they would have gladly helped to punish. The Doctor promised them a horse for their old indunas who could not walk, and to each chief the right to carry a rifle. For this promise they were also thankful, but it had not been fulfilled. Then Mr. Colenbrander had left the country, and matters grew worse.

Here Sikombo took up the tale, and spoke of the Native Police. "The young men," he said, "left their kraals, enlisted, and came back the masters of their fathers, and their indunas outraged the women, stole the cattle, and lashed their betters, without rhyme or reason. These men were the chief cause of the mutiny."

Then again he, Sikombo, had gone one day to Bulawayo to speak on matters of importance with the indunas there.

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He had asked for meat. It was their custom to give a stranger meat; but the white induna, he said, had told him that he might go and eat his dogs. Then Somabulana began again. The Native Commissioners, he said, were harsh, and refused them justice, raided their kraals, captured their women in a body and gave them to their young men —the Police. They had paid twenty cows for these women, and they never got back either the cows or the women. They went to the induna in Bulawayo for redress, and got none.

He named five Native Commissioners, and impeached them before Mr. Rhodes. These men, he said, for the sake of peace in the land, had better go. They were too many. Here Mr. Rhodes interposed for a moment. "Tell them," he said, "there are no more Native Police; they will be done away with." On the other points he would make no promises, saying that their grievances would be looked into at a fitting time and place. As for the cattle, rinderpest had killed them all, both those belonging to the white men and the black. Here more than one voice chimed in: "Not only our cattle, but our goats and sheep have fallen victims to the disease"; and one chief called out, "My dog also," which statement was applauded by the assembled natives. Then followed an impeachment by Sikombo of an official who, owing probably to the impartiality of his administration, seems to have drawn upon himself the hatred of every native in the country. His name was received with deep guttural mutters, and shouts of "Ihamba" (he shall go). Mr. Rhodes told them that this official was no longer in the Government employment, that he was digging gold. Umlugulo remarked, "There is plenty of gold across the great river to the south. Let him go there and dig." Somabulana, with a great smile upon

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his rugged face, suggested that the gentleman in question be sent to keep a wayside canteen upon the road. Then Mr. Rhodes grew somewhat impatient, and said, "This is all very well, tell them these things are small matters. The great question is: Shall it be peace or war?" Somabulana, picking up a stick in front of him, lifted it with both hands above his head, and flinging it at the feet of Mr. Rhodes, said, "See, this is my gun." Picking up another, he repeated the action, saying, "This my assegai. It is peace, my father; I have spoken." Mr. Rhodes then said, "I am afraid if you remain in the hills my young men will think there is no peace. Come out with your women and children and cultivate the lands in the valleys. The rains are very near at hand; the time for sowing has almost passed; the clouds are gathering. If you do not sow now in time, your women and children will be starving and you will be coming to me for food. My white people in Bulawayo are living on the stuffs brought in tins from Cape Town. There will be a famine in the land."

The chief nodded intelligently. Umlugulu speaking, said, "You must remove your men farther from us. Our women are afraid to venture out. Keep them together if you will, but not here."

Sikombo asked for a location.

Mr. Rhodes told them that they had been given a location, but would not live there. Speaking to Colenbrander, he said, "Ask them where they would like a location."

Quickly came the answer, "Upon the Umzingwane River."

"Tell them," said Rhodes, "that all the ground there is taken up by the white man."

Passing to another subject Mr. Rhodes said, "I want this big road to the left (Tuli Road) open. I must get

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grain and food that way. If I do not get grain that way there will be a famine."

Somabulana answered, "It is good. The road shall be open. We, too, want grain. We are coming to you to ask for it."

Speaking of Thabas Amamba, Mr. Rhodes said, "Tell them that the women and children captured there are upon the Bembezi River."

The chief of that district said, "Yes, I know; that is my town. They are at the Queen's Kraal."

Then, one after another, more petty chiefs spoke rapidly in succession, harping always upon the Native Police, the official whom they disliked, the Native Commissioners, and the location question.

Mr. Rhodes, once more growing impatient, said, "Tell them these things are past; they have been mistakes. I thought they would like their young men employed as police, to give them something to do, but I was wrong. Tell them we must now look to the future. We must speak only of peace or war."

Again came reiterated protestations of desires of peace at any price. They had "konsaad"[1] amongst themselves; it was peace. They wanted Mr. Rhodes to remain amongst them, because neither he nor Dr. Jameson knew what was done to the natives in their absence.

Touching upon a dangerous question, Mr. Rhodes told them that it was not their fighting that had made him so angry, but that they had killed all the poor women and little children.

It was indeed a dangerous topic; the brows of the chiefs lowered, and they looked upon the ground, but

[1] Here this word means, as nearly as possible, "discussed."

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could make no defence. Somabulana weakly accused our men of also having killed women; but it was pointed out that this was done by mistake in battle, whereas they had committed murder in cold blood. More downcast looks, and it was evident they had no defence.

Mr. Colenbrander suggested that it was a dangerous subject to pursue.

Then Mr. Rhodes said, "Tell them all these things are past. I will hear all their grievances in detail later. If they say it is peace, let them come down with their wives and women into the valley. I shall be here. I shall move nearer to them up the river, and they may speak to me when they will. I will send to-night to the captain of the white impis and tell him it is peace between us, but the men in the forts must remain there."

Somabulana answered, "It is good; let them remain there, and we will pass them" (making a gesture of a man going by).

Concerning the Tuli Road, he said: "It is open; no one shall be molested upon it. Go yourselves to-day and see. We will also send word to the captains of our impis. We are the ears and the mouth of the Matabele nation. What we speak is law. Dhliso is here; I am here; Nyanda (the king's brother) is here; Umlugulu and Sikombo are here. It is peace; you have our word. Once the Matabele declares peace it is so, and there is no war. We are the nation. We have submitted to you, our father and great chief. Only remain in the country to look after us, and do not come and go."

Speaking of the so-called treacherous attack upon Faku, after messengers of peace had been sent to the chief Babayana, the induna stated that Babayana commanded no impi, that the messengers did not reach the chiefs until

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after their forces had left, and that they had then hastened to avail themselves of the offer.

Then Mr. Rhodes, rising, said: "All right; tell them it is all over. I shall be here for some days yet, and they may come and see me about anything they wish. Tell them to come down with their wives into the valleys and sow. They have not much time."

The rising of Mr. Rhodes was the signal for the breaking up of the indaba. The restraint of the council was at an end. Some of Mr. Rhodes' party had been giving to one or other of the chiefs fills of tobacco, and the rest were apparently dying for a smoke, and crowded round begging for a share.

Once again it was a critical time; more than one chief carried a battle-axe. They outnumbered the whites by about ten to one, and Mr. Rhodes and his companions were completely at their mercy. Mr. Rhodes during the interview had glanced at his horse. The reins were in a knot round his legs. He hesitated. Should he undo them? No, it would be a sign of weakness; and he left the horse as it was until the end of the indaba.

As he prepared to mount and ride away, some of the chiefs turned back in the direction of the kopje. Many of the warriors on the hills, seeing the indaba over, commenced to descend, evidently eager to hear the news. Then from the natives came shouts of "Hamba gashle!"[1] and "Inkos, Baba!"[2] the chiefs raising their right hands and saluting Mr. Rhodes. He, in his turn replying to the salutation, said, "Shlala gashle, Manduna!"[3] and, with

[1] "Go carefully!" really, "Go in peace."

[2] Chief! Father!

[3] "Remain in peace, indunas." This is the correct reply to "Hamba gashle."

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expressions of goodwill and friendship on both sides the interview ended and the deputation started off. It did not take them long to ride down through the pass, gain the opening, and get back to camp. Sikombo, during the palaver, begged for a dog with which to hunt guinea-fowl, and this Mr. Rhodes promised him. The chiefs were, for the most part thin, and bore signs of hard times. At least five thousand men were represented by the assembled chiefs, who were the flower of the Matabele nation.

After the conclusion of this now historical indaba, Mr. Henry Colenbrander, accompanied by his two Zulu servants, Andries Duma and S'Rutumezi, all three without arms, proceeded some miles into the hills, and, after some palaver, induced Sikombo to come down to Mr. Rhodes' camp, where the whole situation was discussed with this crafty chieftain, the Machiavelli of the Matabele.

The Second Indaba.

On the Thursday following the first indaba, a second meeting between Mr. Rhodes and the rebels was arranged to take place at the foot of a big granite kopje, on the summit of which Usher had his farmhouse, and about a mile from Usher's Fort.

Dhliso, Babayana, Mshete, with two other indunas, and last, but not least (in his own estimation), the notorious Kaal Kwmalo, were the principal spokesmen at this interview, and conducted themselves throughout with decorum. The younger men and warriors, however, of whom a hundred and three were present, behaved in a most disorderly manner, constantly interrupting the proceedings with remarks which more than once bordered upon insolence.

Mr. Rhodes' party consisted of Mr. Rhodes himself,

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Mrs. Colenbrander, Chief Native Commissioner Taylor, J. Grimmer, McDonald, FitzStubbs, and Armstrong. Colonel Plumer was also present, and was accompanied by his Staff-Captain the Hon. Beresford, Lieutenant Moncrieff, and Trooper Laurie. The Press was represented by Mr. V. Stent (Special Correspondent for the *Cape Times*), and Mr. Witt (of the *Bulawayo Chronicle*). Notwithstanding the possible danger, Mrs. Colenbrander, with her sister, Mrs. Smith, pluckily insisted on witnessing the debate; and their presence helped greatly to reassure the natives of the pacific intentions of their recent opponents.

At first things looked decidedly ominous; every one of the assembled natives had come to the conclave fully armed. Colenbrander, however, refused to open the indaba until all weapons had been laid aside. Some demur was made to this demand, when Chief Native Commissioner Taylor, and Native Commissioner Armstrong, going right in amongst them, persuaded them that no treachery was intended. The main question at issue was whether it was to be peace or war. The younger men appeared to be still eager to fight, and waxed eloquent on the subject of their hatred to those chiefs (Faku, Gambo, and others) who had sided with the white men. Mr. Rhodes, in a firm manner, refused to listen to complaints on this head, averring that those who had been loyal were his friends, and he would hear nothing against them. When, however, regardless of this rebuke, the young men continued their offensive remarks, Dhliso turned round and authoritatively enforced silence. During this part of the indaba, it was borne home to the little group of whites how critical the situation was; for should the rebels take it into their heads to turn upon the ambassadors, barely one could hope to escape alive. That Mr. Rhodes was

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fully alive to the hazardous nature of the undertaking, may be gathered from the fact that the Maxim at Fort Usher was trained, ready loaded, in the direction of the kopje; whilst the garrison, with horses ready saddled, stood under arms during the whole time that the indaba was proceeding. Matters fortunately again assumed a more peaceful aspect, and calm discussion followed. Pressed to give a definite answer to the question of the hour, Dhliso and the other chiefs, while showing themselves desirous of peace, asked for time in which to take the opinion of the whole nation.

Mr. Rhodes warned them, should they persist in fighting or again taking up arms against us, that the forts would hem them in on every side, and those who were not killed would die like trapped dogs. At the conclusion of the indaba Colenbrander, taking Babayana to one side, urged him privately to throw the weight and influence of his counsel on the side for peace. "Tula, baba, tula,"[1] muttered "the ears of the Matabele nation" (as this personage was called by his late master), "I understand things, and am doing my best."

On the return of the party, most of whom went back with Mr. Rhodes to Fort Usher, the latter remarked that the interview had had just a sufficient spice of danger about it to make it interesting. Mr. Rhodes, it may be added, again resisting the entreaties of his staff, who wished him to remain mounted, continued during the whole indaba seated on a boulder, under the shade of a large tree, within an arm's-length of the rebel chiefs.

[1] "Silence! Father, silence!"

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THE THIRD INDABA.

This indaba may be described, from an Imperial standpoint, as the first official indaba yet held, for here the Deputy Commissioner, Sir Richard Martin, for the first time since the suspension of hostilities, spoke to the rebels in the name of Her Majesty the Queen. There were also present Earl Grey, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Colenbrander, the Rev. D. Carnegie, Father Barthélemy, C. N. C. Taylor, together with Colonel Plumer, Major Robertson, and other interested spectators from the Base Camp. Lady Grey, Lady Victoria Grey, and Mrs. Colenbrander were also present. Preceded by the Union Jack and twelve Lancers, Sir Richard Martin rode forward to meet the chiefs as they approached. Most notable amongst them were Sikombo, Dhliso, Nconcobela, Sikota, Ntweni, Nhluni, Mabesa, Nyanda, Babayana, Nhlukoniso, and Kaal Kwmalo.

The Rev. Carnegie interpreted for Sir Richard Martin, and Mr. Colenbrander, as usual, for Earl Grey and Mr. Rhodes. The latter gentleman introduced Earl Grey and Sir Richard Martin to the indunas, informing them that both came in the name of the Queen, that Earl Grey had come to take Dr. Jameson's place, and that the Queen had also sent Sir Richard Martin.

Earl Grey then addressed the assembled indunas at some length. In the first place, he acquainted them with the terms upon which the Queen would accept their surrender to her authority. He stated that Her Majesty approved of the course which had been adopted by Mr. Rhodes, and told them that they would be given the opportunity to come out of the hills, when they could rebuild their houses and cultivate their gardens. He insisted upon the necessity of giving up of all arms, and did

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Colenbrander. Macdonald. Mr. Rhodes' Secretary. Cecil. J. Rhodes. Mrs. Colenbrander.

A Group at Indaba Camp.

Face p. 232.

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not disguise the fact that all murderers who had been guilty of a crime in cold blood would be punished. Sir Richard Martin, in his turn, corroborated the previous speaker's statements, and again referred to the fact that the giving up of arms would be enforced, inasmuch as these had been used for purposes other than the defence of the country. Following upon this, Mr. Rhodes especially addressed Sikombo, appealing to him and his fellow-chiefs to bring the people back to their senses. He told them to come out of the hills, as they now had nothing to fear. The indunas, in reply, constantly expressed themselves afraid, and were each time reassured on the subject by Mr. Rhodes, who told them that he would be remaining there some time and would be always ready to listen to what they had to say. Throughout the conference, which lasted some hours and was of a deeply-interesting nature, past grievances were as far as possible discussed, and the lines of a future *modus vivendi* were gone into thoroughly.

* * * * *

After the indaba above described, negotiations between Mr. Rhodes and the Matabele chiefs were to a great extent of an informal nature. Day by day they would come down in twos and threes to his camp at the foot of the hills, and squatting down under the shade of the "Indaba Tree," would smoke the pipe of peace with the white men. So pleasant were these visits made for them, that after a while the hospitality of the camp was noised abroad, with the result that the place was besieged with chiefs, who came by the score from far and near to express their submission, and carry away such gifts as the great white induna might think fit to bestow upon them. Flour, tobacco, clothing and the like, were freely dispensed at the

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hands of Mr. J. W. Colenbrander, who from early morn till dewy eve was busily engaged in writing out passes, and generally attending to the wants of native applicants. Now and then Mr. Rhodes, accompanied by one or two of the party, would ride in amongst the hills, and his fearless bearing probably had a greater moral effect on the

"TONY," MR. RHODES' COOK.

native mind than anything else he could have done or said. Babayana, Sikombo, Gambo, Mtshana, and Dhliso were frequent visitors, and the first-named, who is the king of "cadgers," never lost an opportunity of taking toll.

The spot which Mr. Rhodes had chosen for his temporary residence in the Matoppos, distant about four miles

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to the East of the Base Camp, was picturesquely situated beneath the shadow of the hills, and hither all who wished to see him on business or friendship resorted. Those who were privileged to partake of his hospitality will long remember the excellent *cuisine* provided by his faithful cook, Tony, whom General Carrington—no mean authority on such matters—eulogised as the best veldt *chef* he had ever met with.

At an early stage in the peace negotiations, General Carrington who was with Mr. Rhodes, was pointed out by the latter to Babayana and Dhliso as the warrior who would wipe them out if they should remain hostile. Babayana, regarding the General with evident interest not unmingled with awe, remarked solemnly, "Well, he looks angry enough." These two notables slept that night close to Colenbrander's wagon, and were heard by that gentleman talking matters over. Babayana was of opinion that it was as well they did not have to negotiate with the General. He looked too fierce. "Yes, Babayana," Dhliso answered, "he'll kill us all, I can assure you, if we give him the opportunity."

The Final Indaba.

The final indaba in the hills, between Mr. Rhodes, His Honour the Administrator, and the rebel chiefs, was held on Tuesday, October 14th. With the exception of one or two who from illness were unable to attend, all the notable men of the Matabele nation were present.

For the first time the friendly chiefs—Faku, Gambo, and Mtshana—were brought face to face with their rebellious brothers, other than in battle. With the indispensable Johan Colenbrander interpreting, Earl Grey told them that

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he had come to speak to them at Mr. Rhodes' request. He had no wish to refer to the past. It was the future to which they must turn their attention. They must start to till the soil, or they would be overtaken by famine. Even if they wanted to fight, they would find it was useless to pit themselves against the white man. Mr. Rhodes and he were at the same time anxious that they should enjoy peace and contentment under the white man's rule. He quite understood the feelings of the indunas in deploring the loss of their authority, and he recognised that the nation was discontented at having no head. The indunas who showed themselves worthy would be reinstated in authority, and would draw a monthly salary from the Government; their chief aim should be to maintain peace between white and black. At this point it was observed that Sikombo had crossed over to Gambo, and was taking snuff with his quondam enemy, a sufficient indication that they had mutually agreed to burying the hatchet. On the chiefs pleading strongly for one head, Mr. Rhodes replied that it would create jealousy among them if one of their number were appointed chief over them all, but that they could all approach the "White Inkose"[1] at Bulawayo, through the medium of their respective Native Commissioners. To this the indunas replied, "We can only have one head, and we thank you."

Earl Grey impressed on them that they must come out of the hills and so prove their loyalty. They would then be as well treated as Gambo and others who had remained friendly. Horses would be provided for the use of those indunas who were appointed under Government, so that they might have the means of going to Bulawayo when they wished to do so.

[1] Chief.

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Maratshula. Somabulana. Sikombo.

Ntweni. Malevu. Chief Native Commissioner Taylor.

Native Commissioner Taylor and Native Chiefs.

Face p. 236.

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A complete understanding had now been arrived at, and Mr. Rhodes, in bidding them farewell, thus addressed the indunas :—

"Indunas, I have now lived for some time with Johann, at the very door of your strongholds. We have lived amongst you, talked with you, and heard your grievances. When I first came I was advised to live among my white impis, but I said, 'No; I will live unarmed among my children.'" (At this the indunas expressed loud approval.)

ASSEGAIS AND SHIELD.

Mr. Rhodes continued: "Well, now I leave you. Forget the past, and be loyal to your Queen, and to the promises you have made me. I don't think you will want to fight again." ("No, no!" from all the chiefs.) "If I had told you three months ago that you would be sitting in friendship beside Gambo, you would not have believed me; but see, it is so, and it shall remain so."

This speech was greeted with marked approval by the indunas, while Somabulana, speaking on Mr. Rhodes' last sentence, remarked loudly, "Therefore we call you 'Umlamulanmkunzi.'"[1]

[1] The bull who separates the two fighting bulls—the Peacemaker.

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Mr. Colenbrander, who rendered such yeoman service, was likened by Faku, who enforced his words with the most curious antics, to the tick bird, who accompanies the big elephant everywhere, and helps him get rid of the ticks.

The indaba terminated, as usual, with a distribution of gifts amongst the indunas and their wives. Thus ended the closing chapter of what must ever be regarded as one of the most eventful pages in Rhodesian history.

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CHAPTER I

The Mountain Battery

THE Mountain Battery, or to be more correct, a Section of No. 10 Mountain Battery, R.A., which accompanied the Column to Thabas Amamba, and through the Matoppos, consisted of two 2.5 R.M.M.L. Screw Guns, 34 gunners (11 regular and 23 men of the B.F.F.), 30 coloured muleteers, and 40 picked mules, under command of Lieutenant R. H. F. McCulloch, R.A. The guns were brought up from Natal by this officer, and after the Campaign were bought over from the Imperial Government by the Chartered Company. The Mountain Battery was a very business-like corps. The prompt manner in which the guns were limbered up and brought into action, the absence of all fuss and confusion, and the discipline prevailing, were noticeable characteristics of this branch of the force. The mules were a fine lot, regularly groomed and fed, and their smart appearance was all the more marked by contrast with the poor, half-starved and much belaboured animals of the Transport. On their backs were placed muzzles, barrels, wheels, ammunition, tools, and general *impedimenta* belonging to the guns, and the ease with which they carried their heavy burdens over the worst description of country, showed how well they were adapted to their work. The rebels were probably more surprised at the manœu-

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vres of the screw guns than anything else connected with the Column. The manner in which weighty and destructive weapons could be conveyed on the backs of mules, and in remarkably short time be brought to bear on themselves from the rocky heights, was a source of surprise to them, and they never ceased to wonder how the thing was done.

"At Thabas Amamba," said Lieutenant McCulloch, in reply to an inquiry as to details, "we first came into action shelling a valley at 800 yards, then we shelled a kopje in front at 350 yards. One of our shells went into a cave and killed twenty-seven of the enemy, the bodies being afterwards seen and counted by Major Robertson of the Cape Boys Corps. As a rule, owing to the splendid cover that the rocks afforded the rebels, it was a difficult matter to estimate how many were killed by the fire from the guns. During the attack on Thabas Amamba we fired five ring and twenty-five shrapnel.

"At Babayana's, on the 20th of July, we opened the ball at a range of 2,500 yards; only five shots were fired that day.

"On August 1st, at Mtshabezi Valley, we shelled across it at the rebels in the heights. There was a small kraal there at 2,500 yards, into which we dropped two shells. As we were going along this valley, a party of the enemy was observed on a cliff to our right, and two shots were sent into a cave where some had taken shelter. The day following, we were suddenly brought into action near a hill at very short range, varying between 300 and 1,000 yards. On the first day we fired seven ring and two shrapnel, and on the second five ring and seventeen shrapnel. At the fight at Sikombo's on August 5th, we fired three ring, twenty-one shrapnel, and eight case. We opened with case quite blank at close quarters, the rebels trying to rush

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the guns, and coming to within thirty or forty yards of the muzzles. Here we had three mules and a horse wounded. During the operations on the 9th of August, twelve ring, fourteen shrapnel, and one case were fired."

The projectiles of these guns include common shrapnel, case shot, ring, and star shells. Ring shells are made up of segments; shrapnel are fired with a time fuse, timed according to range, to explode in so many seconds. Case is for close range up to 500 yards, and consists of a number of bullets within a shell, which bursts before the charge leaves the gun. The star shells are used for signalling at a height, and can be seen for a great distance.

Both Lieutenant McCulloch and Lieutenant Fraser, second in command, were wounded in the leg at Sikombo's fight; the Mountain Battery was accordingly placed under the charge of Captain Hoël Llewellyn, who directed its movements on the 9th.

MATABELE WEAPONS.

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CHAPTER II

The Signalling Detachment

"ANY volunteers for the Signalling Detachment?" This was one of the questions put by the regimental Sergeant-Major to each batch of the troops at Mafeking. Gradually, by ones and twos, the required complement of a dozen was made up. These, so far as time would permit, were equipped and instructed in their work, and they left for the front, under Captain Dent (Leicester Regt.), on April 21st, arriving at Macloutsie on May 13th. Here they were attached to D Squadron, and reached Khami on May 27th, just too late to take part in Colonel Plumer's fight on the Umguza. When the Column went to Hope Fountain, the signallers set to work to establish heliographic communication with Bulawayo.

On the departure of the Column for the Gwai Patrol, sufficient of their number was left at Hope Fountain to keep up the connection, the remainder accompanying the Column. During the patrol, there was no signalling whatever, the nature of the country, flat for the most part, and thickly bushed, rendering it practically impossible. On the way to Thabas Amamba, an excellent position for the signalling station, Thabas Induna, is passed; but on losing sight of that, no further communication with Bulawayo was kept up by helio.

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THE SIGNALLING DETACHMENT

During the engagement at Thabas Amamba, Colonel Plumer's and Major Kershaw's respective columns were

FIELD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AT MALEMA CAMP.

kept in touch by means of flag signalling. In all subsequent fights flag signalling was much used, and proved of great value.

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From the base camp at Usher's, the Bulawayo Engineer Train laid down a telephone line, which of course did away with the necessity of a line of helio stations to Bulawayo. Before leaving Usher's, a signalling party was located at Thabas Inyorka, having with them a small escort from the garrison at Hope Fountain. Thabas Inyorka provided an ideal position for helio signalling, as it is one of the loftiest points in the Matoppo Range, and from its summit can be seen all the principal heights for many miles round, the most prominent of which are Thabas Induna to the North, the peaks of Balla Balla to the East, and Inungu to the West, while away to the south is the long sweep of the Umzingwane Valley. Through the medium of this station, communication was maintained between Bulawayo and Colonel Plumer's Column during the two weeks' operations along the hills, from Usher's to Sugar Bush Camp, a branch line meanwhile keeping touch with Inungu on the West.

As a cloudy sky is an exception in this country during the greater part of the year, the helio instrument is chiefly used, for it can be seen at a far greater distance than the flag. During the actual fighting, where the distance between the different parts of the force was not great, the flags did excellent service. These can be read through glasses up to a distance of six miles, and are handier to carry and work than the helio. Learning to read it is the chief difficulty, and as it takes three or four months of daily practice before the average soldier becomes efficient, it will be readily understood under what disadvantages this detachment had to take the field, as only three or four were old hands, and they were more or less out of practice.

The system used is the Morse "dot and dash," and

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those who had been telegraphists soon picked it up well enough to work at a very fair rate.

Signalling was not popular at Mafeking, owing to the fact that men knew they would have to take their turn in the station, and would miss seeing the fun at the front. With a helio having a five-inch reflector, such as the ones used up here, a message can be flashed for a distance of thirty miles. In India, however, with a twelve-inch helio, messages are exchanged between stations as much as eighty miles apart. A great deal of course depends on the configuration of the country, and a bright clear atmosphere is essential. The great service of such a corps on the field, can be appreciated when a horseman carrying despatches is the only alternative as a means of communication.

The post of signaller during an engagement is no sinecure. He stands up in the most conspicuous position he can find, and consequently presents a good target to the enemy's fire. On August 5th, Signaller Lingwood had a warm time of it when performing his duties.

In all probability a line of helio stations will be established to connect the chain of forts situated along the line of the Matoppo Hills. Captain Dent, to whom the writer is indebted for the above information as to the work of this Corps, before he left, selected suitable stations, and prepared a map to guide them, should it be decided by the authorities to carry the scheme of communication into effect.

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CHAPTER III

The Ambulance Department

BY SURGEON-CAPTAIN W. SMITH LUNAN

IN dealing with all military matters connected with the recent Matabele Campaign, but more especially in connection with the sick and wounded, it must be borne in mind that on account of rinderpest, we were practically cut off from all supplies from the South, and further, that owing to the political differences with the Boer Government, no assistance could be looked for from that quarter.

The medical supplies that were already in the country—such as they were—were the only ones available for use during the Campaign. It was always a matter of conjecture when fresh supplies might be expected from the South. Considering the enormous difficulties that the Chartered Company had to face due to this lack of transport, it reflects great credit on that body that they already had in their territory a sufficient supply of medical stores and hospital equipment to carry them through such a lengthy Campaign, and one spread over so wide an area.

On the arrival of Colonel Plumer's Column a Medical Staff was formed as under :—

Principal Medical Officer : Dr. Strong.

Field Medical Officers : Surgeon-Captains Michell, Naggs, Hickson, and Lunan.

The Imperial Troops were looked after by their own

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DR. W. SMITH LUNAN.

Medical Officers, namely :—Brigade-Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel Gormley, Surgeon-Captain Hickson, of the 7th Hussars, and Surgeon-Captain Ferguson of the Mounted

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Infantry. The British National Aid Society was ably represented by Messrs. Sutcliffe and Redpath, both of St. Thomas'. These gentlemen, as is usual with the British National Aid Society, were debarred from taking rank, and were in a great measure free and independent. Both rendered admirable service in the field as well as in the hospital.

The Field Hospital was a large canvas structure capable of containing twenty-five men without overcrowding. Round this were several subsidiary tents, which in cases of emergency were used for the overplus of sick and wounded. There were the usual number of orderlies—trained and otherwise—attached to each Medical Officer. In the field, the greatest difficulty to contend with was that of stretcher-bearers. These, unfortunately for the the wounded, were almost invariably "friendlies" (Matabele) or men belonging to the Native Contingent. On every occasion they proved their unfitness by exhibiting the most abject cowardice. When conveying a wounded man on a stretcher out of action, if a bullet passed anywhere near them, their first instinct was to drop the stretcher, hide themselves behind the nearest shelter, and leave the poor victim to his fate. It was only with the utmost trouble and a most free use of strong language, that these natives could be induced to approach the scene of actual hostilities at all. It is advisable that in all cases where the transport of wounded by hand is concerned, the duty should be entrusted to Europeans specially told off for the purpose. On one occasion the wounded had to be carried on stretchers for ten miles from the scene of action to the Base Hospital. Where wounded men have to be carried a distance of some miles by untrained hands, it was nearly always necessary to use morphia liberally in order

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to give them some respite from their pain during the journey, and that they might not arrive at the hospital in a state of exhaustion.

In all our fighting in the Matoppos, we were fortunate in always having an abundant supply of water, a great desideratum where wounded men are concerned. On the arrival of the convoy of wounded from the scene of action at the Base Camp, the necessary operations were conducted without delay, and they were made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. When the number of cases amounted to overcrowding, the most suitable were removed to Bulawayo Hospital, where, unfortunately, owing to the heavy tax made upon it at this time, wounds and cases of operations which had been done well on the field, took in many cases an unhealthy turn, and in several cases terminated fatally.

Throughout the Campaign there was not a single case of "tetanus," but unfortunately several cases of spreading gangrene occurred amongst injuries to bones from gunshot wounds before they could be treated at the Field Hospital. Spreading gangrene in one or two instances supervened within twenty-four hours of the infliction of the injury. For such cases there is of course no treatment, and only one termination.

The missiles used by the enemy were of the most varied description, including as they did, Lee-Metford, Martini-Henry, and No. 12 smooth-bore bullets, fragments of quartz with lead melted round them, and fired out of smooth-bore guns, the glass stoppers of soda-water bottles, slugs, and even curb chains. The term "pot-leg" is used to describe any projectile not recognised in civilised warfare, and the name owes its origin to the custom of the Colonial Kaffirs in the wars of forty years ago, who broke

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off the legs of cooking-pots and fired them from their old flint-lock guns.

From the above it may be judged that the wounds received were of the most varied and ugly nature. The impact of any of these irregular projectiles upon a bone almost always leads to the loss of the limb, and not seldom to the loss of life itself. It is different with such a bullet as the modern Lee-Metford; at close quarters this bullet drills a small hole through a long bone without fissuring or splintering it, and providing no important soft structure is injured, the wound does well; at the same time, it must be borne in mind that this Lee-Metford bullet cuts through a blood-vessel like a knife, and immediately causes violent hemorrhage. In one instance which occurred, a man was shot right through the lower end of the wrist-bone by a Lee-Metford bullet fired at close range; the hole in the bone was merely scraped, and treated with antiseptic dressing, and in a few weeks the patient recovered without suffering any deformity or permanent injury to the hand. Not so however with the Martini bullet—a much larger, heavier, and softer mass of metal, of less velocity and greater trajectory—it has a marked tendency to bruise the soft tissues and comminute the bones. In the case of the round bullet, although the velocity is much less in comparison than both of the preceding types, the bruising and comminuting forces are much greater. It was no unusual thing in operating on a gunshot wound to find the bone extensively splintered by a bullet composed of pebbles incased in pewter or lead; needless to say, these cases invariably necessitated amputation.

It is in the field where injuries are frequent that one can fully realise the greater tenacity of life possessed by the native over the European. As an instance of this may be

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cited the case of one of the Native Contingent who was shot at Inungu. He received a pewter bullet between the third and fourth ribs of the left side in front. The injury did not seem to inconvenience the man to any noticeable extent; he ate heartily, slept soundly, exhibited no hemorrhage from the mouth, and showed but little rise of temperature. Two days after the injury he was operated on, when a piece of the shoulder-blade was removed at a point corresponding with the entrance wound in front. The bullet was found just underneath, where it had smashed one of the ribs. The fractured rib was excised, and a large drainage tube inserted along the track of the bullet. Three days later the wound was examined, was found to have healed by first intention, and the patient progressed uninterruptedly to recovery.

Another instance was that of a native boy who had his fingers and thumb completely shattered by a blow from an axe. It was deemed inadvisable to sacrifice the hand, a course which would certainly have been adopted in the case of a European. A compromise was effected by removing the fingers and subjecting the lacerated muscles of the thumb to antiseptic treatment. The wound granulated and healed in due course, and the boy recovered with a fairly useful limb. Had such a treatment been adopted in the case of a European, tetanus would almost certainly soon have ended his life.

Such cases could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but the above two are cited as showing what one constantly meets with in colonial practice.

Leaving the subject of local injuries, and passing for a moment to everyday ailments of life in a South African Campaign, no subject is of more absorbing interest to all ranks than that complaint known as the "veldt-sore."

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This is a troublesome, angry ulcer, manifesting itself chiefly on the hand and forearm. There is nothing of a specific origin about it; but given a very limited supply of vegetables or limejuice, with abundance of corned beef, a scratch on the knuckles, little opportunity for washing or keeping the hands clean, and we have the essential elements for the production of a typical veldt-sore. Provided the hands can be kept clean, a scratch or abrasion would produce no more discomfort than on ordinary occasions; but taken in conjunction with the all-prevailing state of uncleanliness and the utter want of fresh vegetable nourishment, there are all the causes which may produce total inability for work, unless the surrounding conditions of the patient are entirely altered. There is no limit to the number of veldt-sores which may exist in any given case. It is certain that all scratches, abrasions, and chaps during a campaign must be carefully attended to, or the result will surely be a crop of veldt-sores. The treatment for this complaint consists in observing the most absolute cleanliness together with antiseptic dressings, and a liberal diet, of which vegetables must form a large proportion.

Occasionally cases of dysentery were frequent, and were due mainly to indiscretion in the selection of drinking-water, but as they were almost always sent to Bulawayo Hospital, they can hardly be reckoned among the sick at the Base Hospital. Such an institution is intended primarily for the injured and wounded, and is no place for the treatment of medical cases during active service, when a properly organised hospital, with a staff of trained nurses, is within reasonable distance.

Malarial fever did occur also, but to no appreciable extent. The Campaign had stopped ere the fever season —*i.e.* the period of the rains—had set in.

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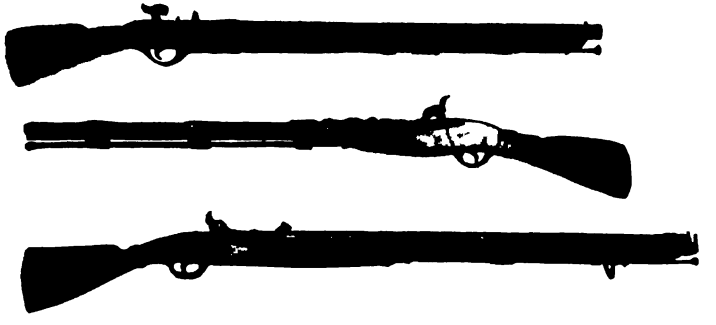
THE AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

Seeing that the Matabeleland Relief Force was recruited from all sorts and conditions of men, which means humanity in its most mixed form in South Africa, all cases presenting themselves to the hospital, had they been taken at the sufferers' own estimate of their gravity, would have necessitated a much larger Medical Staff than could have been provided.



BLUNDERBUSSES USED BY THE REBELS.

It was from these guns that they fired the deadly "pot-legs."

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CHAPTER IV

The Religion of the Matabele

The M'Limo

IN most countries, civilised and savage, the superstitions of the ignorant are employed as a lever by which the cunning and unscrupulous influence the course of events to the attainment of their own ends.

Matabeleland is no exception to this rule. The changes and chances of life are so obviously beyond the control of man, that even the ignorant savage recognises that there must be some agency at work outside his ken. In the case of the Matabele the abstract idea of the Deity is represented by the M'Limo. This being stands in much the same relation to them as Jupiter did to the Ancients, Brahma or Vishnu to the Hindoos. Hence the talk of killing the M'Limo, as if he were a human being, is utterly absurd. The belief in the M'Limo did not originate with the Matabele, but belongs in the first instance to the aborigines of the country—the Amakalangas—from whom the Matabele, or to give them their correct name, the Amandabele, imbibed the idea, which was first generally promulgated amongst them in the reign of Lobengula.

Umsilikaze,[1] the contemporary of Chaka, who brought his impis into Matabelaland and founded the Amandabele nation, did not receive the popular superstition with

[1] Literally translated, "A very fine path."

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favour. Upon his arrival in the country he assembled his people and said to them, "I hear that there is one M'Limo talking in the land, and prophesying strange things. I know all about him. Mr. Moffat the missionary has told me that he is Satan; and if I hear any more of him I will destroy him."

It argues well for the supernatural astuteness of the Supreme Being of the Amakalanga, that during the life-time of Umsilikaze, the voice of M'Limo ceased to be heard in the land.

Upon the accession of Lobengula, however, the M'Limo belief, which no doubt had been cherished secretly by the Amakalangas, once more resumed its sway and flourished. Whether the new king accepted in his own mind or not the religion suppressed by his father is uncertain; but be this as it may, Lobengula, probably from politic motives, lent his countenance to its practice. He had no objection to a friendly understanding between Church and State, and whilst not a slavish follower of the M'Limo, he at the same time recognised in the belief a factor whose influence was too powerful to be left out of account. Such matters as the blessing of the crops, and other functions of the Abantwana M'Limo (children of the M'Limo) were encouraged by the king, who sent presents and offerings to the mouthpieces of the Deity. He flattered them, he patronised and he made use of them, but it is significant of the real attitude he adopted towards them in his own mind, that when displeased he also punished them. On one occasion a Mashonaland Umtan M'Limo having displeased Lobengula, he was sent for by that despot, whose Court however he never reached, for the king sent an impi to meet him at the Shangani, and that particular Umtan M'Limo was heard of no more. The M'Limo worship, as

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before stated, originated with the Amakalanga, from whom the Amandabele adopted it, but the conquered race have retained the office of priesthood amongst themselves, and here we find a curious paradox, for the subject portion of the community are in exclusive possession of the sacerdotal functions and privileges. The right of practice is held by certain families, and is handed down from father to son, except in cases where a particularly cunning youth is discovered, who after a rude species of initiation is invested with authority to communicate with the M'Limo at his various caves.

The ceremonial adopted whenever the deity is consulted much resembles the rites performed in ancient days at the temple of the Delphic oracle. Laden with offerings of grain, Kaffir beer (tshwala), freshly killed meat, and other useful produce, the credulous natives approach the mystic site and deposit their gifts at the entrance of the cave, which is shrouded by a screen of grass mats. After solemn dancing and incantations, one of the priests, standing in front of the barrier, announces that he is ready to transmit any questions it is desired to put to the Deity. A question is asked, the priest repeats it three times in a loud voice, and the answer comes from behind the screen in muffled but perfectly audible tones. This is effected by the confederate in the cave who speaks through a horn, with his head wrapped in a blanket. The revelations are necessarily of a somewhat ambiguous nature, but are enough to satisfy the public mind.

Before the rebellion, the M'Limo had just acquired extraordinary credence by predicting the rinderpest. One of the Abantwana M'Limo had news of it through some channel only known to himself, long before it reached the South. Then again the deity informed his worshippers

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that the drought which had played such havoc with the crops of 1896, would cease when they had killed some of the white people. Strangely enough after the murders of Maddocks and the Cunningham family, the rains which had held up so long immediately commenced to fall. Much capital was made out of the eclipse of the moon in March as an omen foretelling strange things to come, while the Abantwana M'Limo did not fail to point out to their credulous followers that it was only since the advent of Dr. Jameson and his white impis, that the large red locust, that scourge of the mealie fields, had made its appearance in the land. It is certainly a fact that prior to 1893, there is no record of this insect ever having visited Matabeleland.

Thus by the subtle cunning of the M'Limo priesthood, instigated probably by the crafty originators of the actual rebellion, natural causes and current events were used as instruments to convince the wavering, and ensure unanimous action throughout the country in the great attempt which followed to drive out the white invader. Emboldened by the curious success of their prophetic utterances, the children of the M'Limo predicted that the rebels need have no fear, as the bullets of the white men when fired would be turned to water. When the insurgents found, however, that the Martini and Winchester bullets were as deadly as ever, they became extremely wrath, and threatened to kill the high priest or chief Umtan M'Limo.

It says much for the cunning of the witch doctors that by such simple artifices as were theirs they should be able to play so successfully on the credulity and superstitions of a people by no means lacking in intelligence.

The more enlightened of the native leaders and counsellors, though perhaps well aware that the whole business

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is a fraud, recognise in this witchcraft a powerful weapon which may be opportunely used to further their own ends, and for this reason alone, it would not pay them to discountenance the belief. Faku, our old ally, is the one brilliant exception. He is by nature far too intelligent and straightforward to connive at, or believe in, any such humbug. The manner of his disillusion was effective and complete. He had been sent by the king to consult the M'Limo as to the best means to cure the gout, from which Lobengula was a sufferer. If the M'Limo could perform miracles as he professed, either he must provide a cure or stand confessed a fraud. Faku applied to an Umtan M'Limo, and demanded that the complaint should be removed. To his astonishment Faku recognised in the person of the priest one of his own Amaholis or slaves. Faku fell into a great rage. "What!" cried he. "Am I a fool or a child to be imposed on in this manner?" and forthwith he proceeded to curse and blaspheme the M'Limo in a manner very much the reverse of complimentary. The priest retorted by calling down the vengeance of heaven upon the head of the unbeliever, but his anathemas were cut short by Faku, who fell upon the impostor and, some say, killed him on the spot. Faku has never been forgiven this act of sacrilege, and he lives to this day under the ban of excommunication. When the story was related to the king, he laughed heartily. "The M'Limo," said he, "has a good time of it like the missionary. He knows his business and lives on the fat of the land; he gets plenty of grain and beer, and in exchange fools the people into believing he is a god. Leave him alone, it is his way of making a living." But Faku whenever the affair is referred to in his hearing, mutters, "Dogs, dogs, my own Amaholis too! but they could not take me in so easily."

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Lobengula himself was frequently addressed and treated by his people as the M'Limo. This was probably done more in fear than reverence, for he possessed absolute power over their lives and property, which power he was not slow to exercise when he had the mind.

The M'Limo is the professed deity of peace and plenty, crops and harvest, the god of agriculture, similar to the Ceres of old. It was only during the late war that he was invested with the attributes of Mars, and fell into disrepute. From the foregoing, it will have been seen that this Amakalanga Diety — the M'Limo — exists only as an abstract idea. This being so, it may reasonably be asked how it was that Burnham the American Scout, assisted by Native Commissioner Armstrong, contrived to kill the M'Limo? Any one who closely followed the incidents connected with the rising of the natives in Matabeleland, through the medium of the Press, will doubtless remember the highly coloured and sensational accounts that appeared, describing exactly how the thing was done.

The following plain statement of fact derived from an authentic source, though perhaps lacking the daring originality of fiction as conceived by a Fenimore Cooper to suit the palate of the credulous, at least has the merit of being true :—

When Armstrong first came up to this country he was appointed to the post of Native Commissioner at Mangwe. This place being surrounded by the tribes of the Amakalanga, Armstrong naturally heard a good deal of talk about the famous M'Limo, and was sufficiently curious to make enquiries about him. On questioning the natives, he was told that there was a man who used to take them to the caves of the Matoppos and deliver prophetic utterances from within. This put him on the

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scent, and he set about discovering the resort and habits of this gifted individual. Having at length assured himself as to his identity, Armstrong rode into Bulawayo to obtain permission from the authorities to secure or destroy him. This was granted, the only condition being that Burnham the Scout should accompany him. Accordingly, these two proceeded to Mangwe on their mission.

Now Armstrong knew that the cave said to be frequented by the M'Limo, had two entrances—a large one in front, and another one at the back only big enough for a man to creep through. His suggestion was to send out certain natives for the purpose of arranging a general beer drink to be held at the mouth of the cave; while this was in progress he and Burnham would enter by the back door, kill the impostor and then call upon the natives outside to come in and see their dead god. Burnham, however, opposed this scheme on the ground that it was foolhardy, and in its stead suggested that they should just scout around the place and, guided by circumstances, decide later how they should effect their purpose. This was overruled by Armstrong who gave it as his opinion that the whole business would result in a failure if the natives once "smelt a rat." So, early one morning, these two adventurers set out with a guide, to visit the cave of the M'Limo. After riding for some time among the hills they neared the spot, and coming in sight of a party of natives, swerved off to the left unobserved. Scarcely had they done so when they suddenly came upon a number of women—about fifty of them. Armstrong held up his hand as a sign that he wished to speak with them, telling them as they approached, that he and his companion had lost their way, and enquired of them the way to Mangwe. He then asked them where the M'Limo lived, to which they

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replied, "You'll find him mending the fence of his garden over there," pointing towards a hill about a mile distant. Riding on, they found the object of their search engaged as the women had described.

As soon as they perceived him, Burnham wanted to shoot him at sight, but Armstrong objected, as they were not yet certain that the person they saw was the individual they wanted. Armstrong called out to the man, "Look here, we have come to talk with the M'Limo. If you will show us where he is, I will give you a present of two blankets." The ordinary native, as Armstrong well knew, would not dare to enter the holy cave, and if this one did so, the fact would speak for itself. The man readily assented to the proposition, and without the slightest hesitation, led them up a winding track and stepped into the cave. As he went in Burnham followed and shot him dead on the spot.

Armstrong then set fire to the old man's hut, while Burnham went to fetch the two horses which he led away over the rocks with all haste.

This is the whole story. What might have happened would fill many pages. Beyond those already mentioned no other natives were seen, neither did the M'Limo hunters meet with any resistance in the execution of their plan.

Unfortunately for the halo of romance shed around the incident, it was afterwards discovered that the old man "the genius loci" who came by his death in this tragic manner belonged to a friendly tribe, being one of Faku's people, who throughout the native troubles showed themselves loyal to the white man. The pictures which adorned the pages of the illustrated journals depicting Burnham and Armstrong mounted on thoroughbreds, galloping over impossible country, through a horde of

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natives brandishing assegais, reflect much credit on the imagination of the artists but are hardly calculated to convey to the mind of the general reader a correct impression of what really happened.

NATIVE ORNAMENTS.

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Faku. Ndibali. Malevu. Sikombo. Mbambeleli. Maswi. Nhlukoniso.

Mapisa. Somabulana. Nykomo. Mtokana. Manyoba. Umlugulu. Mlagela.

A group of important Matabele Chiefs.

Face p. 262.

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CHAPTER V

John Grootboom

A Native Scout

AMONGST the many names of those who have risked their lives throughout the late conflict with the rebels, by no means the least is that of John Grootboom. His services as a spy upon the positions and movements of the enemy have been invaluable. Possessing an intimate knowledge of the country, and the customs and tactics of the natives, combined with courage and absolute self-reliance, he was just the type of man most adapted by nature and disposition for purposes of espionage.

John Grootboom is a Cape Boy, and his black skin, no less than his big heart, has many times saved his life, when a white man under similar circumstances would have stood no chance whatever. Divested of the ordinary garments of civilisation, with clean shaven face and head, tonsured *à la Matabele*, John has little difficulty in passing for one when occasion requires. He is a specialist, knowing instinctively when to meet cunning with cunning and bluff with bluff, and, no less important, the exact moment when it is most advisable to "make tracks." At the time of writing, he is living about eight miles from Bulawayo, alongside the Mission Station at Hope Fountain, and there it was that the writer had the opportunity of listening to a recital of some of his many adventures.

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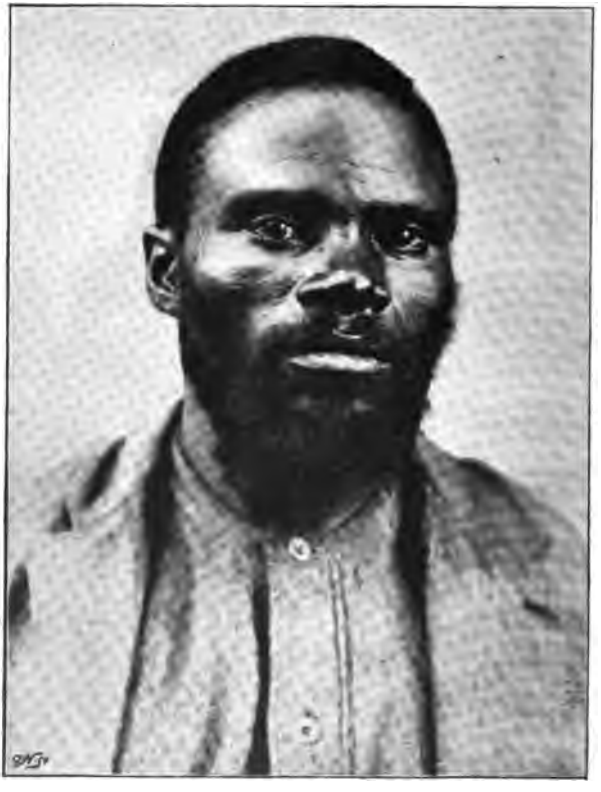
John is quite a character. When interviewed on personal reminiscences of the late war, all he requires is a sympathetic audience. From the word "go" there is no hesitation. The narrative is told in a sort of polyglot



JOHN GROOTBOOM.

broken English, freely interspersed with Dutch and Kaffir words, delivered at the rate of about three hundred per minute. When in the effort to extract information from him on all he knows, and a great deal he thinks, about the

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subject under discussion, one is apt to get slightly mixed. All that is required, however, is a hint now and then to devote the stream of his eloquence into the desired channel.

Questioned as to his visit to Thabas Amamba previous to our attack, he said he left Bulawayo six days before on foot. Sleeping by day and travelling by night, he arrived at Inyati on the morning of the third day, Monday, June 22nd. After resting, he started at nightfall for Thabas Amamba, which he reached before daylight. On the following day he lay concealed amongst some rocks not far from the stronghold. "At night," he said, "I went into the mountains and saw every place where the enemy was. I saw the Matabele's cattle in the kraal, and went close up to their scherms where they were busy cooking. At one place I could plainly hear them talking. I went in from the east side of the hills, and after seeing where all their fires were, I went right round to the other side. Here I was very nearly caught. I was going through a narrow place between two large rocks, and when I looked back I saw a fire just behind where I had come in, and another one above me. I had to pass these again on my way back. From one spot on the top of the rocks I could see something white against the fires, and after a little time I made out the wheels of a wagon which they had there. Later on at night a great number of the Matabele started dancing and singing. I could not say how many there were, but there must have been a very large impi, as their fires could be seen whichever way I looked. A lot of them who had been to consult the war doctor at Thabas Amamba, returned to the Matoppos before Colonel Plumer's Column arrived at Inyati."

John Grootboom said that the Matabele fighting men

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were getting rather suspicious about the Abantwana M'Limo and other so-called mouthpieces of the M'Limo. They were told that the white man's bullets would glide off their bodies like water, and they believed it. Just before Spreckley's first patrol they were further told that all the white men would be killed. Fortified by implicit faith in such fables, they went out carelessly to meet the white impi, and were much surprised when so many of their number were killed. They went back to the priests much aggrieved at the failure of the M'Limo to carry his promises into effect. The only satisfaction they got, was the assurance that the M'Limo would make it all right the next time.

When Brand's Column left on the Gwanda Patrol, Grootboom was at Hope Fountain, and word was sent him to join the Column at Dawson's Store on the Tuli Road, distant about eighteen miles. He was to go on foot, and would be given a horse when he reached the Column. "I started off that night just at sunset, and on getting to Dawson's found the Column had gone on. I followed on as fast as I could, and at mid-day came to the place where they had had breakfast; half a mile on, I met a Matabele. He asked me where I was going. Well, you see, I couldn't say that I was after the Column, so I told him that I was on the way to where some of my cattle were, among the hills at Mglaba, as I wanted to make sure they were all safe. 'Very well,' he says, 'I know you, but you had better keep away from the road, as the Matabele are just ahead, being doctored by the M'Limo.' Pointing to the spoor of the horses in the road, he said, 'they had meant to tackle the white men in the pass, but the white men were through it before they could get round.' He says, 'We don't want any more white men down that road' (the Tuli Road).

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Then he says, 'Hamba gashle' ('go well'), and I said, 'Shlala gashle' which means 'stay well,' so I went on for about five miles, when I saw some more Matabele following up the horses' spoor along the road, and I turned off the road to get away from them, but they had already seen me. I thought it was all up with me, as they were only five hundred yards away. Then I ran very fast for about half a mile till I came to a kopje. Here I fired some shots at them, and some ran round one side of the kopje, and some the other. I watched them, and waited my chance to slip out between the two parties, and I managed to get into some long grass. Here I lay down, for I was nearly done up with running. I could hear them searching about for me, and one of them did find my spoor, but I had taken my boots off when I got to the kopje, so he mistook the spoor of my bare feet for one of his own people, and luckily for me did not follow it up. If he had? oh yes, I should have been killed. I stayed where I was till it was nearly dark, and then went on through the veldt away from the road, for fear the Matabele would see my spoor. By the next morning, I was at the Mulungwane River, and I slept all that day in the hills. That night, I caught up Captain Brand's Column at Manzi M'Nyama."

Grootboom came back with the Column and was in Brand's fight on April 8th. He says that the fact of Brand getting through with such a small number of men, and at the same time killing so many rebels, prevented the general attack on Bulawayo. Several impis in the Matoppos were waiting to hear the result of the attack on Brand, and had it been successful they intended to join forces and kill all the inhabitants of Bulawayo.

John has a great respect and admiration for Colonel Baden-Powell, or "Colonel Baking-Powder," as he calls

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him; but the hill-fighting tactics of Colonel Plumer and his men did not meet with his approval. "The Column," he said, "would march into the hills, and have a fight, and then at night go back to camp. That is no way to fight the Matabele. You must sleep in the hills after the battle and keep on following the enemy from one kopje to another, and kill so many that you break his heart. But instead of that, you go back to camp, the Matabele thinks you have had enough of it, and soon they collect together again, and are more confident than ever. No," continued John, "the white man don't understand fighting among the rocks. They go out in the open and let the Matabele shoot and shoot, and down they fall. I saw one man walk out from behind a rock, and as he did so, a Matabele shot him through the head. But you don't see Colonel Baking-Powder do that. If they want to shoot him, they must go after him, catch him out from where he hides. He knows better than to stand up to be shot at."

With regard to the present situation John has his own ideas. "There is no fight, there is no peace. It is no good. The Matabele says he is boss, the white man he says the same. I don't know what to think myself. They won't try to attack Bulawayo again, or come round these parts. They say the white man means to live there; very good, let him stay where he is, and we will keep to our part of the country, the other side of the Umsingwane River. That is the way they talk; they are very cheeky, and say they have not been beaten. They have some very fine country on the other side of the Matoppos, all along the Tuli River, where there is plenty of water always and fine Mapane veldt. They keep all their cattle there, and store their grain. There are parts where no white man has ever been. At Kanone there is a large opening in the hills,

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and the only way in is through a small hole. They drive the cattle up to this, and then make them bend their knees, so that they can crawl through. At another place, the Matabele have built up stone walls, from one rock to another, on the flat ground, so as to form a large kraal." To illustrate this, John brought into the hut a number of stones, and piling them on the table, was giving a graphic description of this Matoppos fortress, when we heard pat-pat-pat on the roof, and looking out saw a large swarm of locusts coming down on the wind. With a howl, John rushed off to scare away the pests from his garden, assisted by his wife and piccaninnies, and the writer recognised that the interview was at an end.

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CHAPTER VI

Babayana

THIS Matabele worthy, who has been erroneously described as a great and powerful chieftain, leader of impis, and a great deal more than his position justifies, has no claim whatever to the rank of induna or chief. For all this, the name of Babayana is better known, and has been more discussed, than any other during the late rebellion. Babayana may be described as the Li Hung Chang or counsellor of the Matabele nation. His principal characteristics are cunning, a most tenacious memory, and what is commonly called "the gift of the gab." Possessed of each of these to an extraordinary degree, he has literally talked himself into the position of confidential agent and counsellor to the nation, and in Lobengula's time he was known as the "King's ears." Moreover, Babayana has been to England, has spoken to the Great White Queen, and with his own eyes has seen the wonderful sights of civilisation. This, no doubt, gives him a recognised status amongst his countrymen.

He spends most of his time in telling the tale of his novel experiences across the blue waters. The old scoundrel is getting on in years now, and hobbles about with a stick, attended by one or two native followers and several native Kaffir dogs. Dressed in a native police tunic of some antiquity, with a wide-brimmed hat on his grizzled

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Babayana.

Babayana "at Home."

Face p. 270.

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head, so far as its upper part the covering of his body conforms to respectability. This, however, is somewhat discounted by the fact that he despises "continuations," his nether limbs, either from poverty or choice, being unencumbered by clothing. He has a much-wrinkled and intelligent face, capable of great variety of expression when talking. Like many of his race, he is a master of metaphor, and accompanies his speech with the most graphic gesticulations. The first time the writer met him was after the last indaba at Mr. Rhodes' camp. He was squatting down on his haunches in the shade beside M'tshana, Lobengula's old general. Naturally anxious to get a picture of these two famous characters, I approached Babayana on the subject through the medium of an interpreter. "He says he knows all about it. He has often had his likeness taken before. He wants you to give him ten shillings." He had evidently not been in England for nothing. With a promise of a copy he was induced to face the lens, with the result shown in the accompanying illustration. Babayana's stock-in-trade, so far as the English language is concerned, consists of "All a right." This he invariably uses to express "How d'you do," "Good-day," and "Thank you," when addressing any one not versed in the Matabele vernacular. His incessant flow of language indicates that he is accustomed to an attentive audience, and in argument he could give most men and some women many points and a beating. Perhaps one day, when they get tired of his persistent advice, his Matabele friends will mete out to him a similar fate to that by which the ancient Greeks ridded themselves of Socrates. Some years ago Lobengula took one of Babayana's daughters to wife, but she did not conduct herself as became her exalted position, and she was expelled the

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country. Babayana is now located at a kraal a few miles to the south of Bulawayo, and may now and again be seen in town on a "cadging expedition," for since the war is over, he is cute enough to be on the best of terms with the powers that be, and is always ready to swear eternal fealty to the white man, in exchange for a bit of tobacco.

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Babayana. Mtshana.

Babayana and Mtshana.

Face p. 272.

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CHAPTER VII

Hope Fountain Mission

THE London Missionary Society station at Hope Fountain, illustrations of which are given, is distant from Bulawayo about eight miles, and lies on the edge of the Matoppo Hills. It was looted and burnt down by the rebels before the arrival of the M.R.F., and near it the Column was encamped at the latter end of May. The Rev. E. Carnegie, who has resided there for many years, is intimately acquainted with the natives in that district, and was a *persona grata* at the court of the late King Lobengula.

Mr. Carnegie, early in the peace negotiations, and in company with John Grootboom, ventured some distance into the hills in the neighbourhood of the Mtshabezi Valley, for the purpose of discovering what had become of the converts of the Mission. That he ran no small risk may be gathered from the fact that rebels whom they encountered showed evidently hostile intentions, and it was only by the exercise of the utmost *sang froid* and tact, that he and his attendants escaped with their lives. Remaining among the rebel strongholds two or three days, he succeeded in finding his people, who gladly hailed his appearance, assuring him that they had been forced by the insurgent Matabele to forsake Hope Fountain and the paths of peace. They finally escorted him through the rebel lines towards the Base Camp at Usher's.

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The illustration depicts Mr. Carnegie as he was found by the writer, ministering to the physical needs of his half-starved followers, who are collected all round him awaiting their daily bread at his hands. The numerous "piccaninnies" with their native teacher have just finished

INTERIOR OF THE MISSION STATION AT HOPE FOUNTAIN.

lessons, and are being paraded in front of the ruined Mission House.

Hope Fountain is distinctly the prettiest spot in the neighbourhood of Bulawayo. With a perpetual stream of clear water running between the hills, with wooded slopes and grassy vales, no more pleasant site for a residence could well be imagined.

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An amusing story is told by Mr. Carnegie, as illustrating the simplicity of the untutored Matabele. Amongst other modern appliances at the Mission is a force pump, which serves the double purpose of irrigating the garden lands

MEMORIAL TO MAJOR WILSON AND PARTY.

and supplying the house with water. This pump is worked with a wheel turned by hand.

Now the Matabele warriors in Lobengula's time regarded the missionary and all his works with suspicion,

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and by no means approved of his influence over their people. However, living as he did under the avowed protection of the king, they knew better than to indulge in any open acts of aggression. Time after time, when passing the homestead, they had noticed the pump at work. Not understanding what it was for, they at once concluded it was some sort of magic; it was "mtagati," or bewitched. Ah, well! they would watch this thing, see how it was managed, and turn the white man's craft against himself. Jubilant with this idea, one moonlight night a party of picked men repaired to the bank of the stream where the pump was. On trying it, they were pleased to find that by dint of some exertion two men at either handle could do the trick. Turn and turn about they kept the machine going, fully determined to give the missionary all the magic he wanted, and a balance in hand.

After about two hours, fairly exhausted with their labours, and satisfied that the white man had not the monopoly of this particular species of witchcraft, they departed homewards. Meanwhile the scheming natives had put in two hours of gratuitous labour. They had filled the missionary's tank to overflowing, and his good lady would be glad if a similar surprise party paid the station a visit regularly every week.

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Hope Fountain Mission Station.

The Rev. D. Carnegie, L.M.S., Native women and school children.

Face p. 276.

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CHAPTER VIII

Father Barthélemy

ONE of the most familiar figures during the campaign was that of the good priest, Father Barthélemy.

It was he who, at Thabas Amamba, cheerfully assisted in bearing the wounded into camp, and breathed words of spiritual counsel and comfort into the ears of the dying.

Of unflagging zeal and kindly disposition, unassuming but always at hand when needed, he won the esteem and respect of all ranks. Father Barthélemy accompanied Captain Brand's patrol to the Gwanda district, and was with them when they ran the gauntlet through the rebel impis on the Tuli Road.

Later on he became attached to Colonel Plumer's Column, and was present at most of the fights in the Matoppos, and it was he who performed the last solemn rites over the bodies of those who fell in battle. Coming safely through all the perils to which he was exposed, and none the worse for his rough experiences in the field, he has once more returned to his cure in Bulawayo, where all who, regardless of religious distinctions, can appreciate the work of a good man, will wish him a prolonged and peaceful career.

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FATHER BARTHÉLEMY.

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CHAPTER IX

A Trip through the Matoppos with a Camera

IT is customary for the illustrations to a literary production to be but a subordinate feature. As such, therefore, the illustrations usually follow on the compiling of the letterpress. In the present instance, however, the graphic, or rather the Matoppographic, work of taking views among the hills, led up to the more ambitious attempt to describe the several events associated with them.

Undertaken with a view of securing as far as possible an adequate pictorial record of the M.R.F. Campaign in the Matoppos, the journey thereby entailed was not without interest, or even, it may be said, without a certain spice of danger, undertaken as it was immediately after the conclusion of Mr. Rhodes' diplomatic peace.

There was little time, or means in fact, at the disposal of the author and his *compagnon de voyage* to allow of much preparation. Suffice it to say that on a sunny—very sunny—morning in October, a small caravan, consisting of two horses, a pack-mule, a bicycle, a camera, two natives, and the author and his companion, sallied forth in quest of photographic spoil in the direction of Inungu Fort.

Owing to the kind permission of Major-General Carrington, by which we were allowed to obtain rations at the

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various forts visited, the necessity of carrying provisions was obviated ; whilst, armed with letters from Mr. Johan Colenbrander, commending us to the Native Commissioners, we relied on their good offices to assist ; and as events proved, we were not disappointed.

The first fort of call was Inungu, whence access into the hills could be obtained. The scenes of Captain Laing's fight, and the subsequent attack under Captain Nicholson, were visited. Here we were made welcome by Sub-

CURIOUS ROCK FORMATION ON THE WAY TO INUNGU.

Inspector C. P. Chesnaye and N. C. Frank Mullins, who promptly offered to guide us that afternoon to the places mentioned. Dropping revolvers into wallets,—for without appearing to be armed it was just as well to be ready for any emergency,—we mounted horse and cantered off towards Inungu Mountain, whose peak could be seen in the distance rising up above the rugged country. In less than half an hour the pass was entered, and a forbidding place it proved, even for horsemen. The memory of how much more so it had been for Laing's wagons, came

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vividly to the minds of each of us. Presently the party emerged from the granite-ribbed passage into a wide semi-circular valley, through which the Malemo River takes its course under the Fi Fi Mountains, and along the fertile banks of which, signs of recent cultivation were evident. Crossing over some mealie fields, we expected to meet natives engaged in hoeing; but with the exception of one woman who ran away as we approached, the place seemed practically deserted. Remarking on this to Frank Mullins, he observed that there were plenty of natives in the immediate vicinity, and that from the moment of our arrival in their haunts, the movements of the small party were no doubt closely watched.

Leaving Inungu Mountain to the right, we followed the wheel-ruts of Laing's wagons up a narrow gorge, and in due course reached the scene of the fight described elsewhere. Rapidly putting the camera together, the required pictures were taken—not, it must be confessed, without the idea crossing our minds that at any moment the operation might be rudely interrupted; which the constant yelping of dogs, betokening the presence of Matabele amongst the rocks immediately above, did not serve to dispel. Without undue hurry, but nevertheless with no waste of time, we took our pictures, for we had no desire to answer questions as to our business there; and we might have had some difficulty in explaining to the untutored savage the nature and uses of so suspicious looking an apparatus as a camera. As we rode away from the spot, Mullins, with an inclination of the head to the left, explained that Mapisa, an induna whom he characterised as a "damned old scoundrel," had a kraal up in the rocks, and was always very fidgety when any white man attempted to pay him the honour of a visit. On the

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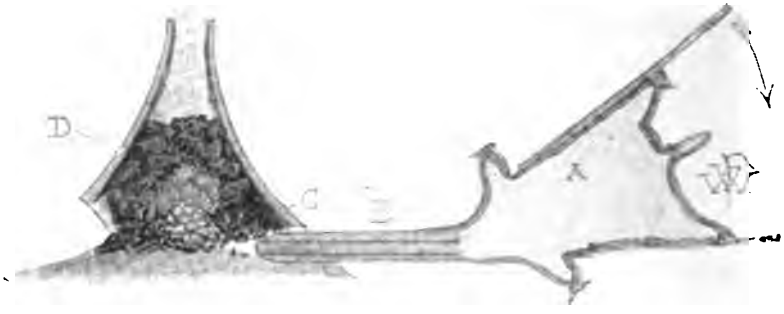
homeward journey a view of the kopje which was the scene of Nicholson's fight was taken. Shortly afterwards, attention was directed to a native forge, where the Matabele "Amaholis" smelt iron from the ore, which they later on fashion into assegai heads, battle-axes, and other implements. The accompanying illustration, from a sketch taken at the time, will serve to show the means employed, as well as to make patent the fact that the Makalanga are not wanting in ingenuity.



SECTION OF MATABELE FORGE, SHOWING :—

A. Bellows made of entire goat-skin.
B. Earthenware pipe.
C. Charcoal.
D. Ironstone.

Diverging from the track to the right, we were shown a curious pile of oblong stones, known locally as the Official Wall. It is probably the remains of some edifice erected in bygone days by those mysterious workmen, evidences of whose handiwork are to be found all over the country. Tradition has it that on the far side some celebrated witch doctor or "Umtan M'Limo" is buried; but the absence of any gravestone with full particulars, beyond the wall referred to, obliges one to take the theory of the

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Our Caravan.

Face p. 282.

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illustrious departed for granted. A pleasant evening with our kind hosts brought the day to a close.

The following afternoon the caravan was again set in motion and a start made for the kraal of the friendly chief Faku, who lives about eight miles from Inungu, just on the outskirts of the Matoppo range.

As the writer pedalled his machine along the native footpaths—which, by the way, afford an excellent track for

NATIVE WOOD-CARVER.

The native "sculptor" manufactures rude figures of animals from solid blocks of wood. Having no paint, he burns them with a hot iron when wishing to represent a dark-skinned animal.

the wheel—the women hoeing in their gardens, or filing along with huge calabashes balanced on their heads, regarded the unusual spectacle with considerable alarm. Some were content to give the uncanny-looking object a clear space of 200 yards wherein to manœuvre, while others, more nervous, dropped their burthens and incontinently fled.

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Faku's Kraal being reached, we strolled in among the huts around which the men were squatting, engaged in their usual occupation of doing nothing. On inquiring for Faku, a tall native conducted us to a big hut and announced the presence of visitors to its occupant. A minute later old Faku made a rather undignified exit from his abode, scrambling out of the small hole at its base on all-fours—for the huts in shape are not unlike beehives,

INTERIOR OF UMLUGULU FORT.

they are ranged in double lines and encircled by a thorn fence.

Offering tobacco to the old fellow, who acknowledged it with a big smile and the comprehensive "Inkose," we sat down. Now should have followed an animated discourse, politeness demanded it, and in the presence of this loyal and gentlemanly Matabele veteran, for he is of no common clay, we felt it incumbent to do the agreeable. Unfortunately, however, our stock of Kaffir phrases was almost as limited as his knowledge of English speech, so

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that even a slight reference to the weather presented insuperable difficulties. The only way out of the dilemma was to present more tobacco; but if this was to take the place of conversation all the time, the supply would soon run out; whereas we had a large supply of conversation on hand which we would willingly have substituted for the, to us, more valuable article. Even Faku realised the situation. Prompted no doubt by the most courteous motives, he got up to go, and starting to hobble off, he at the same time wished us farewell in his very politest manner. This wouldn't do at all; he must be interested. With this in view he was invited to inspect the bicycle and the camera, and in order that he might be under no misapprehension as to which was which, the respective uses of each were demonstrated. So delighted was he at seeing the picture on the screen that he immediately ordered Kaffir beer to be brought on—a proceeding to which we offered no objection whatever. It was delightfully cool, with a pleasant acid flavour. I took a large head of Faku, but unfortunately the result was not the success it should have been; whether the fault of the operator or the sitter or the Kaffir beer, or of all three, matters not; it was a failure.

Faku, not being accustomed to pose, soon tired of the amusement, and intimated that he was too old for such frivolity; at least W——, who professes a knowledge of Kaffir, said so, and I was not in a position to contradict it. Before leaving, Faku, who was dandling a small pot-bellied piccaninny on his knee, explained in expressive pantomime that the said youngster had been indisposed and required medicine. With the noble example of the late Colonel Burnaby and the box of Cockles' Pills in mind, I produced from my pouch several quinine tabloids, which, after cutting them in half—for the child was very

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small—I gave with sundry directions to the old man, who seemed vastly pleased with the present. Faku, it may be mentioned here, is the last induna living who was appointed by Umsilikaze. He has always been loyal to the white man, and at the outbreak of the rising, sent in to Bulawayo to obtain permission from the authorities to fight the rebels on his own account. An allusion is made to him in another chapter in relation to the M'Limo. He must have been a fine-looking fellow in his prime, but now the years are telling on him. This fact is further accentuated by a lameness in one leg, caused by an encounter with a lion, which he succeeded indeed in killing with his assegai, but not before the animal had severely bitten him in the thigh.

Next day, after a brief look-in at Malema Camp, where the troops still were awaiting disbandment, we went to Usher's, the first Matoppo fort built. On arrival, it was too late in the day to visit the N'Kantola or Babayana's stronghold, so we pottered around and made acquaintance with the members of the garrison. After breakfast on the morrow W—— and I set off on horseback for the N'Kantola, distant about five miles from Usher's Fort, with a Cape Boy as guide. Our henchman "Jim," who stood about 6 ft. 3 in. without his socks, on being told to accompany us into the hills, refused point-blank. He said he was afraid, so we did not press the point, but allowed him to remain at the fort till our return.

An hour's ride brought us to the well-remembered spot where, on July 20th, the first attack was made on the rebels in the hills. Acting on the advice of Native Commissioner Armstrong not to take too much for granted, only two views were taken of the position from different points. Noticing a body of natives coming up the valley,

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Interior of Usher's Fort.

Face p. 286.

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we retraced our steps to the fort. Thence, on the following day we proceeded to Mtshabezi Fort, a distance of thirteen miles, where we fell in with Sub-Inspector Russwurm and Native Commissioner George Mullins who did all in their power to make our stay at their fort a pleasant one. The next morning W—— had to strike across country for Bulawayo to take up an appointment under Government, leaving me to finish the trip on the bicycle by myself. After his departure, George Mullins and I, accompanied by two Cape Boys with rifles, rode several miles down the picturesque valley of the Mtshabezi, where I was able to take a picture from the exact position occupied by the guns when shelling the heights on August 1st. A magnificent view of the open country extending along the base of the Matoppos for twenty miles is obtained here, and it was with reluctance we left the place in search of fresh subjects for the camera.

Turning back, we commenced to scale the bald rounded face of the granite range, and on reaching the top rode in the direction of some isolated clumps of rock at the back of which Mullins said that we should find a kraal. Before getting there, we passed by the remains of a long series of bush scherms, behind which the rebels had awaited the attack of the Column. On nearing the kraal—a fair-sized one—it was seen that the huts had been recently rebuilt, the grass thatches being still yellow. Hearing the sound of horses' hoofs, the inmates came running out, whereupon we dismounted, and proceeded to explain the object of our visit. By means of gifts of tobacco and a lengthy explanation from Mullins we were soon on friendly terms. A group was formed, with the chief Nuke sitting on a board in the centre. Nuke and one or two others had a look under the focussing cloth, but were not reassured by

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seeing every one upside down on the screen; they told Mullins they knew it must be some sort of magic, as they did not understand it. The inmates of the kraals were most of them in an emaciated state, and on looking into the pots we found they were boiling hides and roots; what the soup so concocted would be like may be imagined—certain it is that we did not request a taste of it. Later on, the kraal—a typical hill village—was photographed, and shortly afterwards we left on the return journey. Bidding farewell to the hospitable residents of the fort on the morrow, I mounted the machine and followed the road to Umlugulu Fort, about sixteen miles distant. All along, the natives were to be seen busy at work in their gardens, preparing the soil for sowing, before the commencement of the rainy season. Umlugulu was reached early in the afternoon, and there Native Commissioner Henry Colenbrander and the officer, Sub-Inspector Gwynne, were interviewed, and their sympathies enlisted. Here I remained several days, during which time Colenbrander, Davis, and I paid a prolonged visit to the scene of the well-remembered fight of August 5th, at Sikombo's stronghold, with its many features of melancholy interest. One afternoon was spent in making a call on Nyanda, a brother of the late king Lobengula. He is an intelligent fellow and had about the best kept kraal, so far as cleanliness and order are concerned, we had yet seen. It is situated on some rising ground at the foot of the main range, about four miles from Umlugulu Fort. At the invitation of Nyanda, we entered the kraal fence and, on doing so, noticed a peculiar object on the ground near the door of the principal hut. A nearer inspection proved it to be an old woman, whom Colenbrander explained was Nyanda's mother. She presented an extraordinary appear-

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Nuke's Kraal, near Mehabesji.

(A typical hill kraal.)

Face p. 288.

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ance, as, gathered up on the stone floor in a half-kneeling, half-sitting position, she gazed upon us with lack-lustre eye, forcibly recalling to our minds Rider Haggard's description of the old hag Gagool in *King Solomon's Mines*. This was the same personage who had been used as an envoy in the negotiations between Mr. Rhodes and the rebels just before the first indaba. More than sixty years ago she—now "wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly"—had, as a

NYAMBEZANA AND NYANDA.

buxom lass, and a young wife of the famous warrior Umsilikaze, come up to this country from Zululand. Being in her dotage, the attempt to glean any details of her past career was hopeless. Tobacco, the "open sesame" to all friendly relations with natives, was produced, and graciously, nay greedily, accepted by this ancient member of the Matabele aristocracy. Whilst engaged in focussing for the picture, Mrs. Nyanda, a tall

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inquisitive woman, came up to the camera and peeped under the cloth. At that moment the elder lady, whose image was reflected on the screen, moved her clawlike hand. With a yell of fright the former jumped aside, and would have nothing more to do with the uncanny machine.

At Umlugulu Fort is the last resting-place of those who fell on the memorable 5th of August. The spot is well

GRAVES OF LIEUTENANT A. J. HERVEY AND SERGEANT INNES-KER IN THE CEMETERY AT UMLUGULU.

chosen, being most prettily situated on some rising ground near the roadside. Shaded by trees, with the blue outline of the Matoppo range in the distance, the graves enclosed by a strong fence and marked with wooden crosses, this little cemetery is an ideal soldiers' resting-place.

The names of those who lie in this far-away spot among

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The Cemetery at Umlugulu.

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the hills are, Major F. E. Kershaw, Lieutenant Hervey, Sergeant-Major McCloskie, Sergeant Innes-Ker, Troopers Holmes and Parr. Troopers Greer and Packe, who were killed on April 10th (Brand's fight), are also buried here. It will be comforting to the friends of these dead to know that their graves are well kept, and marked with wooden crosses, which latter are shortly to be replaced by permanent monuments.

[*Appended is the published circular of the Memorial Committee.*]

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Rhodesia Memorial Fund

ORGANISED AND OPENED TO PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION in conformity with Resolutions passed at Public Meetings by the residents in Matabeleland, at Bulawayo, October 12th, 1896, and of Mashonaland, at Salisbury, October 27th, 1896.

PATRON :

PRESIDENT : The Right Hon. Earl Grey (Administrator).

CENTRAL COMMITTEE : *Mashonaland.*—Mr. Wm. Smith, Mr. W. S. Honey, Mr. H. M. Hole. *Matabeleland.*—Mr. Townshend Griffin, Mr. Sydney Redrup, Mr. P. D. Crewe.

SUB-COMMITTEES : *Salisbury.*—Mr. Justice Vincent, Colonel Alderson, Colonel Beal, Mr. H. Marshall Hole, Mr. Wm. Smith, Mr. Wm. Mack, Mr. Wm. Muirhead, Mr. H. J. Deary, Mr. W. E. Fairbridge, Mr. W. S. Honey, Mr. Wells. *Bulawayo.*—Mr. Townsend Griffin, Mr. J. Mudie-Thomson, Mr. E. Ross-Townsend, Mr. G. S. D. Forbes, Father Daignault, Mr. C. G. Grenfell, Mr. E. Clement-Wallace, Colonel J. A. Spreckley, Mr. J. C. Knapp, Mr. Sydney Redrup, Mr. P. D. Crewe. *Gwelo.*—Mr. Fotheringham.

HON. TREASURERS : Mr. Stewart-Williams, *Salisbury* ; Mr. C. Arnold, *Bulawayo.*

HON. SECRETARIES : Mr. Stewart-Williams, *Salisbury* ; Mr. C. Arnold, *Bulawayo.*

ASSISTANT-SECRETARY : Mr. C. E. Goldstraw.

The following, showing the grounds for raising the Fund, is taken from the *Matabele Times* of November 14th, 1896.

For three months the inhabitants of Rhodesia struggled against a rebellion by natives vastly superior numerically, who had treacherously

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risen and massacred white men, women, and children throughout the country. For three months more, aided by Relief Forces from neighbouring States and by Imperial troops, a war throughout the country was continued, whose object was the reduction of the rebellious natives to a pacific condition.

This catastrophe occurred at the most unfortunate of times, when Rhodesia was already beset by serious dangers. Rinderpest had destroyed nearly all the cattle in the country, had stopped transport, and had put the most severe obstacles in the way of communications and food supplies. Drought also threatened to complete the work of destruction caused by the plague, and the country seemed in no fit state to withstand other shocks, but to be at the mercy of the next evil influence that might arise.

The story of these times is too recent to require further repetition, but attention may be drawn to the figures which indicate the condition giving rise to the Memorial Fund.

The Rising in Matabeleland was announced to an unsuspecting public of some three or four thousand men and women in the country, by the murder of a prospector in his camp in the Inseza District on March 23rd. It was immediately followed by other massacres, and day after day there came to Bulawayo revolting stories of men, women, and children—miners, storekeepers, traders, and others, with their families—treacherously and vilely done to death. In many cases the utmost cruelty and brutality accompanied the murders, and in several instances families of large numbers—fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters—were swept away without a survivor. When the long list was made up, subsequently, it was found that the massacre at the outset was of 141 white men, women, and children, and it is more than probable that many others were killed while wandering independently through the vast territory.

The ferocity and wantonness of the massacre was manifested not only by the fact that people of all nations were included—British, French, Dutch, German, Danish, United States, Swedish, Russian, Greek, etc., in addition to greater losses amongst Hindoos, Cape Boys, and other friendly coloured people—but by the indiscriminate slaughter of men and women noted for their kind and generous treatment of the natives, who found no protection in this reputation against treacherous attack by their own servants and other natives whom they had befriended. The whole country was reduced to barbarism within a few days, and only those whites escaped who had found refuge in Bulawayo, Gwelo, the Belingwe laager, or Tuli.

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In the fighting which ensued and continued for six months the death roll was added to by heavy casualties amongst the troops. Fifty-four men were killed in action or died of wounds, 103 were wounded, and 60 died of sickness or other causes, making a total in Matabeleland of 255 dead and 103 wounded.

In June the rising spread to Mashonaland, where equally terrible experiences were gone through. The first note of alarm was struck on May 31st by a murder at Alaska Mine, and thereafter the population had to undergo the ordeal through which Matabeleland had passed, emerging with even more serious a loss in proportion to population. The nature of the country led also to heavy casualties amongst the troops, and when the lists were made up it was found that 120 men, women and children had been murdered, 30 had been killed in action or died of wounds or sickness, and 65 were wounded, making a total of 150 dead and 65 wounded.

These men and women who thus met their fate in Rhodesia were of the class which was the hope of the country, ardent pioneers, persevering cultivators and energetic prospectors, each aiding nobly in the development of the Colony, and finding a death by treachery or utterly causeless brutality. Their names deserve the most earnest commemoration, for they it is who have cemented the foundations of a State which is a worthy addition to the British Empire. This death roll is a higher average than is computed in an ordinary war, standing as it now does for Rhodesia at 405 men, women and children murdered or killed in action, and 168 wounded and more or less permanently disabled.

It is to provide this due commemoration that the Rhodesia Memorial Fund has been organised. The serious losses caused by the destruction of property by the rebels, may be gauged by the fact that the authorities have received claims for £450,000 in compensation in Matabeleland alone, and beyond this is the distress and suffering which the Administration has sought to alleviate, but which can only be fully reached by the careful and discriminating disbursal contemplated through the medium of this Fund.

It is the belief of the people of Rhodesia, and it is hoped that this opinion will be supported by sympathetic observers everywhere, that the sufferings recounted have made more assured the tranquil possession to the British Empire of a territory equal in area to France, Germany and Italy, endowed with great mineral and agricultural wealth, and secured through the zeal and the lifeblood of these Pioneers to the overflow from the congested sections of the Mother

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country. It is therefore confidently hoped that all will see the worthiness of this Memorial Fund, and will enable its objects to be carried out with fulness.

OBJECTS OF THE FUND.

The following are the objects for which subscriptions are solicited :

MASHONLAND.

Firstly : That on the graves of all persons murdered or killed in action during the rebellion there be placed a simple monument or stone, while a handsome monument be erected at such place as shall be afterwards decided, with names of all victims inscribed on it.

Secondly : That a Fund be established for the relief of those persons, whether in the regular or volunteer forces, who have been permanently disabled by wounds received during the rebellion, and of those who have been left destitute or insufficiently provided for by the deaths of persons on whom they were dependent, and that relief under this scheme be in addition to such relief as may be contributed by the Company or Imperial Government.

Thirdly : That a Memorial Institute combining a National Library and Museum be erected, and so far as possible endowed.

MATABELELAND.

First : Memorials to be erected at the graves of those murdered by the Matabele, and those in the Troops who have been killed or have died in Matabeleland during the rebellion.

Note.—It is proposed to erect a general memorial to those whose bodies are not recovered or whose graves cannot be identified.

Second : A fund from which suitable grants can be made in aid of those incapacitated by wounds received in Matabeleland during the rebellion.

Third : An extension of the Memorial Hospital at Bulawayo.

Should the subscriptions to any object show a surplus over the amount required to carry it out, such surplus will be devoted to the other objects at the discretion of the sub-committee.

Subscriptions may be given to the Rhodesia Memorial Fund

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generally, in which case it will be apportioned equally to the objects in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, or may be given exclusively to one Province, or to one or more of the objects in either or both Provinces.

Subscriptions may be addressed to the HON. TREASURERS or SECRETARIES, and made payable to "The Rhodesia Memorial Fund."

JUN 3 1919

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SKETCH MAP OF

MATABELELAND

SHOWING FORTS

1 Inch=20 Miles.

----*Line of March followed by M. R. F. during various operations*

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